United Nations E/HLPF/2016/3/Add.2

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
31 May 2016

Original: English

High-level political forum on sustainable development
Convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council
11-20 July 2016

Input from the Economic Commission for Europe to the high-level political forum on sustainable development

Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat hereby transmits the input from the Economic Commission for Europe to the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

16-08644 (E) 060616

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Input from the Economic Commission for Europe to the high-level political forum on sustainable development

I. Background

1. Following the invitation by the General Assembly in its resolution 67/290 to the United Nations regional commissions to contribute to the work of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, including through annual regional meetings, and the call made in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for strong follow-up and review mechanisms at the national, regional and global levels, member States of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region engaged in a series of informal consultations to determine the modalities for a regional forum on sustainable development, to be held in 2016. Taking into account the ongoing global negotiations on the overall follow-up and review architecture for the 2030 Agenda, and not wanting to pre-empt the outcomes of those negotiations, member States decided to hold the 2016 regional forum as a special informal segment of the eighty-fourth meeting of the Executive Committee of ECE, on 10 May 2016.

2. A meeting between the moderator and non-State actors, which was also attended by interested government delegations, was held before the regional forum on the same day.

3. The regional forum was attended by experts and representatives of Governments, as well as observers from civil society organizations[1] and international organizations. Regional directors and other representatives of 19 United Nations system entities were in attendance.[2] Key messages from civil society organizations and the private sector were addressed to the regional forum by invited speakers. Civil society organizations had coordinated and submitted a position paper relating to the themes of the regional forum.

4. The meeting was preceded by a regional expert group meeting for the preparation of voluntary reviews at the 2016 high-level political forum for the nine volunteering countries from the ECE region, organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat in collaboration with ECE on 9 May, and followed by a two-day meeting of the Regional Coordination Mechanism and the Regional United Nations Development Group Team for Europe and Central Asia.

[1] Association for Sustainable Human Development, International Trade Union Confederation, European ECO-Forum, European Environmental Bureau, European Youth Forum, Centre for Socio-Eco-Nomic Development, Forum of Women's NGOs of Kyrgyzstan, Mama-86, Stichting Rutgers WPF, Women in Europe for a Common Future International, World Vision International and WWF International.

[2] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Atomic Energy Agency, International Labour Organization, International Trade Centre, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Regional United Nations Development Group Team for Europe and Central Asia, United Nations Children's Fund, Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), United Nations Industrial Development Organization, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, United Nations Population Fund, World Tourism Organization, World Health Organization and World Intellectual Property Organization.

5. Together, the four back-to-back meetings formed a "2030 sustainable development week" in the ECE region.

II. Regional forum on sustainable development

6. The eighty-fourth meeting of the Executive Committee of ECE was opened by the Permanent Representative of Latvia to the United Nations in Geneva and Vice-Chair of the Executive Committee, Janis Karklins. The regional forum on sustainable development, as a special informal segment under agenda item 2, was moderated by the Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the United Nations in Geneva, Jan Kara.

Session 1: implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the Economic Commission for Europe region: first steps and challenges

7. The key results of a regional survey on planning, implementation, follow-up and review of the Sustainable Development Goals,[3] carried out by ECE and the Regional United Nations Development Group Team for Europe and Central Asia late in 2015 and early in 2016, were jointly presented by the Executive Secretary of ECE and Chair of the Regional Coordination Mechanism, Christian Friis Bach, and the Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States of the United Nations Development Programme and Chair of the Regional United Nations Development Group Team for Europe and Central Asia, Cihan Sultanoglu.

8. Some clear trends and patterns emerged from the survey, to which 38 out of 56 member States provided answers.

9. National efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda seek to build on existing policy frameworks by updating or adapting existing strategies. This approach is also observed in countries in which the United Nations is represented through resident coordinators and United Nations country teams.

10. The Sustainable Development Goals have an intersectoral character, which is reflected in the extensive use of interministerial coordination structures. Given the complexity of the new 2030 Agenda, significant efforts will be required to identify areas of intervention, adapt the Goals to national and local realities and ensure that the interlinkages between sectoral strategies and programmes are appropriately reflected in policymaking. Progress will depend on awareness of the content and implications of the 2030 Agenda, both within government and beyond. All countries plan to involve stakeholders in the implementation of the Goals, including through particular institutional structures, such as national councils for sustainable development.

11. The provision of norms, standards, legal instruments, policy recommendations and expert advice was mentioned as a key service to be provided by the United Nations system. The degree of possible United Nations involvement in planning and implementation at the national level is quite varied.

[3] Available from www.unece.org/index.php?id=42256.

12. Data quality, availability and disaggregation, monitoring systems and statistical capacities are areas of concern to Governments. Data are essential for effective and transparent monitoring, an area in which the work of the United Nations, at different levels, is deemed particularly significant.

13. Responses from countries with a United Nations presence show that there is strong political will and commitment to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals into current national development strategies, build on progress achieved within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals, back up implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals with high-level coordination mechanisms and ensure financial support. Nationalization of the Sustainable Development Goals is already ongoing.

14. Most countries with a United Nations presence noted that no specific changes are envisaged in budgetary processes. Existing budgetary frameworks are expected to support the implementation of the nationalized Sustainable Development Goals, which will become fully integrated in national strategies, sectoral programmes and policies. However, the availability of the resources necessary to meet the Goals remains uncertain, which underlines the need for domestic resource mobilization and the development of partnerships.

15. The key frameworks for engagement of the United Nations system in countries with a United Nations presence are the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, which are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. The relevance and usefulness of the Development Assistance Frameworks, which are a tangible outcome of the coordination work carried out by the United Nations system, were recognized.

16. The insights gained from the regional survey are complemented by and fully aligned with the responses received from a needs assessment survey conducted by the Regional United Nations Development Group Team for Europe and Central Asia among the resident coordinators and United Nations country teams at the end of 2015.[4]

17. The important role of the private sector in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda was highlighted in a statement submitted by the Managing Director of Global Policy and Strategic Partnerships of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, Carina Larsfälten, and presented by the moderator. It described an ongoing initiative to identify the business opportunities that the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals creates for the private sector, and to develop a comprehensive map of how businesses can contribute to the achievement of the Goals. It was argued that it made sense for the business sector to engage in sustainable development at a far more strategic level than had been the case so far. There were new business models that could align profitability with social purpose and new financial tools that could "crowd in" private capital. However, there were also responsibilities that the business sector needed to embrace in areas crucial to public trust, such as tax, good jobs with fair wages, transparency and accountability.

[4] United Nations Development Group, "Country-level needs for SDG implementation in Europe and Central Asia". Available from https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/SDG-Needs-Assessment_RCs-and-UNCTs-2-December-2015-1.docx.

18. The moderator reported key messages emanating from the meeting held with non-State actors and interested delegations, and stated that civil society organizations were engaging at the national and pan-European levels with Governments on the implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals. However, the impression gained by the organizations was that further work was required to more effectively address the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda, which should be supported with the cooperation of all ministries and address both domestic and external aspects. There was a need to develop more interlinked structures that brought all relevant actors — Governments, as well as the United Nations system and civil society — together.

19. Civil society organizations stated that they had not yet been invited to cooperate in the elaboration of national implementation strategies and plans in most countries. In their view, strong participatory processes were necessary to enable the public and civil society organizations alike to contribute to the design and implementation of the 2030 Agenda at all stages and to engage systematically in monitoring, review and accountability processes. National councils for sustainable development should serve as important mechanisms for the coordination, monitoring and review of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Civil society organizations recognized the importance of the United Nations system in capacity-building, including on statistics, to support implementation of the Goals at the request of countries.

20. In their interventions, representatives of member States echoed and developed some of the key issues that appeared in the regional survey. A number of countries presented their ongoing initiatives with regard to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The overall approach was to refrain from the creation of new structures and processes, but rather to embed the Goals in existing policy frameworks and mechanisms.

21. Significant emphasis was placed on the need for broad stakeholder involvement at different stages, including in the preparation and updating of strategies, adaptation of the Sustainable Development Goals to local circumstances, monitoring and reporting. There was support for a transparent, inclusive and participatory process with broad, multi-stakeholder participation. In particular, monitoring systems could be strengthened through greater public engagement in policy development and reporting on implementation. This wide involvement could be made possible through appropriate institutional structures and participatory mechanisms. In some countries, organizations were also encouraged to make specific commitments to support implementation.

22. The critical role of coordination was also remarked on by representatives of various member States. As demonstrated by the results of the regional survey, there was a need to involve different ministries, including those that might have not been traditionally concerned with sustainable development issues. Some countries mentioned the importance of having a "whole of government" approach, most often led at the highest political level, to appropriately address the interconnected nature of the Sustainable Development Goals. Sectoral strategies needed to appropriately reflect the Goals. It was also necessary to extend this coordination to the initiatives of different levels of government — central, regional and local — all of which were called upon to play an important role in the implementation of the Goals.

23. Representatives of member States emphasized the importance of data for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Appropriate assessments of the existing situation were required for the formulation of suitable policies that should be supported by good-quality data to help the understanding of needs and the monitoring of the impact of policies. Disaggregation was important to ensure that statistical averages did not mask inequalities. Data might come from different sources, so effective coordination would be necessary. Statistical institutions might need to be strengthened in some countries and the quality of data improved. Some countries would welcome guidelines on common reporting that would facilitate the fulfilment of different obligations.

24. The indivisible nature of the Sustainable Development Goals and the need to avoid giving excessive relevance to some of the Goals was also remarked on by delegates. While some issues might receive particular policy attention, the definition of priorities should not lead to "cherry picking" that created distortions or failed to address the interlinkages between Goals. There was also recognition that some elements at the global level or within existing integration arrangements were still missing.

25. Following the interventions of Governments, regional and other representatives of organizations of the United Nations system reflected on questions emerging from the regional survey and the interventions of member States. Reference was made to the significant challenges in collecting appropriate data, notably in the area of gender. Disaggregation down to the local level was considered important to ensure that nobody was left behind. Additional resources would be required to support those efforts, as current data gaps were very large. The importance of the collaboration of all stakeholders was also evident from a sectoral perspective, for example, in agriculture. Partners for broader outreach activities could be found through sectoral work, for example, in tourism. Issue-based coalitions should be established to engage multiple stakeholders and drive progress. The promotion of interministerial work would be a key element for success.

26. United Nations system entities highlighted existing strategic policy frameworks that already reflected the concerns of the Sustainable Development Goals and could be used to further their implementation, as was the case in health and social justice. There were also mechanisms that allowed for the involvement of the private sector, for example, with regard to labour issues. Overall, instruments and mechanisms available in the United Nations system in different areas, including human rights, gender and population, could be used to support the implementation of the Goals. Work carried out under the mandates of international conferences, including analysis at the national level, could provide necessary and useful inputs for the implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda.

Session 2: possible elements of a future regional follow-up and review mechanism for the 2030 Agenda

27. Mr. Bach highlighted a number of key points from the regional survey relating to follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda. In their replies, Governments underscored the need for a multilayered follow-up and review architecture for the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals at the national, regional and global levels. At the same time, member States emphasized that any possible future

follow-up and review mechanism at the regional level must build on existing mechanisms and avoid duplication and additional reporting obligations. The mechanism should also integrate and promote cooperation among relevant actors.

28. Mr. Bach described the basic features of a regional follow-up and review mechanism as part of a multilayered architecture. National reviews and monitoring would be connected to the high-level political forum on sustainable development at the regional level. The regional forum on sustainable development could be designed as a "docking station" that integrated existing review mechanisms and a range of different stakeholders.

29. In particular, a number of contributors and inputs could be integrated into a future regional forum. This could include reviews carried out by the eight Sectoral Committees of ECE and other ECE inputs,[5] as well as reviews and inputs from the regional United Nations system, other regional and international organizations, civil society and other stakeholders.

30. Data is essential for effective and transparent monitoring. At its sixty-fourth plenary session, held in Paris from 27 to 29 April 2016, the Conference of European Statisticians discussed extensively the work on statistics for the Sustainable Development Goals and decided on a road map that charted the way forward for selecting regional indicators, clarifying the set-up of reporting on the Goals, assessing the readiness of countries to report, identifying needs for capacity-building, and communicating and disseminating statistics.

31. Looking ahead, a number of issues will require further discussion and clarification in building a regional follow-up and review platform. These include the role of the European Union and other regional and international organizations (the Eurasian Economic Union, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe) and processes (for example, Environment for Europe, the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health organized by the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe, the European Regional Meeting of the International Labour Organization and the Regional Conference for Europe of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), and the role of other stakeholders (civil society, the private sector and universities).

32. In her introductory presentation, Ms. Sultanoglu emphasized that one of the key messages emanating from the regional ministerial consultation on accountability for the post-2015 development agenda, held in Geneva on 15 and 16 September 2014, was that any global or regional review mechanism would be rooted in country-level review and reporting. Currently, monitoring and review was the most challenging area relating to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, both with regard to the Sustainable Development Goals indicators and their incorporation into national measurement frameworks. Even though the global Sustainable Development Goals indicator framework had been endorsed by the Statistical Commission, challenges remained for further methodological work, as well as complexities of data collection at the global, regional and country levels.

[5] In particular, environmental performance reviews, country profiles on housing and land management, innovation performance reviews, studies on regulatory and procedural barriers to trade, road maps for mainstreaming ageing, global assessments of national statistical systems and reviews and implementation mechanisms within legally binding conventions.

33. Ms. Sultanoglu highlighted three major challenges at the country level. First, to ensure proper monitoring and data collection, countries would need support in either strengthening the existing monitoring systems or establishing new ones in order to respond to the monitoring and reporting demands of the Sustainable Development Goals. The second challenge was data availability and quality, especially for data disaggregated by income, sex, age, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location or other characteristics to capture inequalities. There was a need for intensified, highly specialized and methodological support for national statistical institutions. Third, extensive statistical capacity-building would be required to support national counterparts in data development, collection and policy use for the implementation of the Goals.

34. In connection with the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals in September 2015, the role and the "fitness for purpose" of the United Nations system in the implementation of the global sustainable development agenda had been the subject of intergovernmental discussions. Member States' negotiations were ongoing in the framework of the second phase of the Economic and Social Council dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system.

35. At the regional level, coordination and cooperation within the United Nations system had further intensified, in addition to the formulation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Ms. Sultanoglu cited a joint positioning paper by the regional United Nations system in Europe and Central Asia,[6] which was the outcome of a joint retreat held in 2015 and in which some of the main areas of inter-agency cooperation were highlighted. In response to the Sustainable Development Goals, the regional United Nations system would strengthen joint analytical approaches by emphasizing interlinkages between social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainable development, as well as advocating for building on successes in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and ensuring that current gaps in the Millennium Development Goals were acted upon within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals. It would also forge partnerships and intensify joint advocacy by establishing issue-based coalitions and expanding United Nations engagement with various development partners. Promoting the universality of the Sustainable Development Goals was another priority, with a particular focus on the establishment of linkages between those countries with a United Nations presence and those without. Eventually, capacity-building for monitoring, data and review would be another important priority. The regional United Nations system planned to actively engage with national statistical offices to identify gaps and provide tailored support. Internal cooperation within the United Nations would be strengthened by sharing information on and better connecting the available monitoring systems, data collection mechanisms and links to available data sets.

36. The third speaker, the Director of Global Policies and Sustainability of the European Environmental Bureau, Leida Rijnhout, speaking on behalf of civil society organizations, stressed that the participation of all civil society groups in the follow-up and review of the Sustainable Development Goals was important, notably the nine major groups and other stakeholders that are recognized in the global

[6] United Nations Development Group for Europe and Central Asia and Regional Coordination Mechanism, "Joint positioning by the regional UN system in Europe and Central Asia". Available from https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/2186_UNDG_Europe_Asia_New-Logo.pdf.

sustainable development process. She stated that civil society was concerned about pushbacks in a number of countries, which restrain civil society space. Civil society also was ready to be present at the various levels of the discussion and had important contributions to make to a regional follow-up and review mechanism, for example, capacity-building, providing second or parallel review and contributing to peer reviews. However, adequate funding was needed for civil society to properly fulfil its role. She suggested the development of regional guidelines on civil society participation. Such instruments as the ECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) should be widely used to promote public participation. The region should act as an example in terms of inclusivity and make use of good practices that were applied, for instance, at the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme and the high-level political forum. The speaker also introduced "SDG Watch", a Sustainable Development Goal-related platform for more than 70 civil society organizations, which is currently focused on the European Union region and institutions.

37. A number of Governments stressed that follow-up and review mechanisms at the global and regional levels were still under discussion. At the regional level, it was imperative to use existing follow-up and review mechanisms and platforms to avoid any duplication of efforts and to minimize the need for additional resources.

38. With regard to the set-up of regional follow-up and review, some Governments suggested that ECE should act as a convener and should involve the entire regional United Nations system, including specialized agencies, with due regard given to the division of labour among United Nations entities. Relevant United Nations conferences and processes should also be considered. This would require regional follow-up and review efforts to be properly sequenced and synchronized with other existing reviews. ECE should provide its own inputs to regional follow-up and review, in accordance with its mandate. In addition, ECE should seek coordination with the other regional commissions.

39. Many Governments highlighted the need to build an inclusive mechanism that involved stakeholders such as civil society, the private sector and non-United Nations organizations (such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) in the follow-up and review of the Sustainable Development Goals. However, one delegation cautioned that the different roles of Governments and other stakeholders needed to be respected.

40. Governments reaffirmed the view expressed in the regional survey on the Sustainable Development Goals that added value could be provided at the regional level in a number of areas. First and foremost, regional reviews could promote voluntary peer learning among groups and immediate neighbours that had similar challenges. United Nations regional actors could be facilitators of such a learning process. The results of the peer learning could also be made available globally. The role of a regional review forum could also be to discuss emerging regional issues, including in preparation for the high-level political forum, and to bring together relevant actors. Regional discussions could be held on the annual theme of the high-level political forum. Data and indicators should be covered, as well as, in particular, transboundary issues, since the regional level provided a unique platform to address such questions. Moreover, the regional level could benefit from a certain focus on broader, cross-cutting themes, such as health, water and tourism, which

would facilitate integrated discussion across a number of Sustainable Development Goals.

41. United Nations system representatives stressed that there were numerous issues requiring cross-sectoral and inter-agency cooperation, such as resilience-building, disaster risk reduction, health care, decent work and environment. In those areas, multi-stakeholder approaches would be crucial to achieve progress.

42. Numerous existing follow-up and review mechanisms, platforms and processes were available within the regional and the broader Geneva-based entities of the United Nations system that could play an important role. This included, for instance, the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction, universal periodic reviews that could contribute to strengthened sensitivity on human rights and the European Regional Meeting of the International Labour Organization, held every four years (with the next meeting to be held in October 2017).

III. Next steps and follow-up

43. The Executive Committee decided that the conclusions of the special informal segment of its eighty-fourth meeting, serving as the regional forum on sustainable development, would be forwarded by the Chair as a contribution from the ECE region to the high-level political forum on sustainable development in New York.

44. Furthermore, the Executive Committee agreed to continue, in line with the corresponding outcome of the 2016 high-level political forum on sustainable development, the process of informal consultations on a future regional review mechanism for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the regional level, with a view to taking a decision on the establishment of such a mechanism at the sixty-seventh session of ECE, to be held in April 2017.

United Nations E/HLPF/2016/3/Add.3

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
7 June 2016

Original: English

High-level political forum on sustainable development
Convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council
11-20 July 2016

Key messages of the second session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat hereby transmits the input from the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development to the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

16-09316 (E) 270616

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Key messages of the second session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

[Original: Arabic, English and French]

I. Introduction

1. The Economic Commission for Africa, together with the Government of Egypt, the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank, and in collaboration with the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund, convened the second session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development in Cairo from 17 to 19 May 2016, in preparation for the 2016 session of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, to be held in New York from 11 to 20 July 2016.

2. The second session of the Forum was attended by more than 200 participants, comprising high-level representatives of Governments, major groups and other stakeholders,[1] United Nations bodies and other international organizations.

3. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following member States: Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, the Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Swaziland, Tunisia, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

4. The Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development was established in 2015 by resolution 930 (XLVIII) of the eighth Joint Annual Meetings of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. The Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development held its inaugural meeting in June 2015 in preparation for the 2015 session of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

5. At the ninth Joint Annual Meetings of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, which took place in April 2016, a resolution was adopted reaffirming the mandate of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development. The resolution called upon the Economic Commission for Africa, in collaboration with the African Union Commission and other partners, to convene the Forum annually to follow-up and review the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The resolution stressed the need for the Forum to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development (social, economic and environmental), build on existing platforms to avoid the creation of additional administrative structures, and promote coordination and

[1] The term "major groups" refers to the following sectors: groups and associations of women; children and young people; indigenous peoples; non-governmental organizations; local authorities; workers and trade unions; business and industry; scientific and technological community; and farmers.

coherence within the United Nations development system and other regional and subregional forums. The resolution also called for reviews of the implementation of all regional outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits to be sequenced and synchronized with the work of the Forum to ensure that such reviews contribute to the assessment of the integrated regional implementation, follow-up and review of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda.

6. The second session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development was convened against the backdrop of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and at a time when African countries are transitioning to Agenda 2063 from the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) programme. African countries have committed themselves to implementing both the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. Africa has, therefore, the unique and dual obligation to implement and follow-up both agendas, which are intricately linked and have many synergies. Africa can best achieve the goals and aspirations of the two agendas by ensuring integrated implementation, follow-up and review.

7. The second session of the Forum was also convened in the context of the adoption of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the outcome document of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda is a global framework for financing sustainable development, which reaffirms and builds on the 2002 Monterrey Consensus and the 2008 Doha Declaration. The Agenda includes concrete commitments that are directly relevant to the financing of not only the 2030 Agenda but also Agenda 2063.

8. In addition, the second session of the Forum was held shortly after the ninth Joint Annual Meetings of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, the theme of which was" Towards an integrated and coherent approach for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals". The Joint Annual Meetings reinforced the mandate of the Forum and aligned its periodicity with that of the High-level Political Forum.

9. Against this backdrop, the second session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development was held under the theme "Ensuring inclusive and integrated implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063". The theme was well-aligned with that of the 2016 session of the High-level Political Forum," Ensuring that no one is left behind".

10. During the deliberations of the second session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, it was agreed that inclusion should be the lens that overarched integrated approaches to the implementation, follow-up and review of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The sub-themes guiding the deliberations were the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals; inclusive transformation for sustainable development through Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda; an integrated results framework and integrated implementation, including means of implementation, for both agendas; integrated follow-up and review of both agendas; and the demographic dividend road map for 2017. The deliberations of the Forum were also informed by the outcomes of the pre-meeting of the major groups and other stakeholders.

II. Chair's summary of the key messages

11. The Chair's summary of the key messages agreed upon at the second session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, which will be submitted as an input to the 2016 session of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, is set out below.

A. Transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals

1. Background

12. Africa's remarkable growth over the past 15 years, ranging between four and five per cent on average, has largely been on the back of resource-commodity booms. While this has generated significant fiscal revenues for most countries, it has not created many jobs owing to the capital-intensive and enclave nature of such activities, and consequently large segments of the population have been excluded from the growth process. Poverty, unemployment and underemployment remain high and inequality is also increasing in a number of countries. Based on 2012 data, 389 million Africans are poor; 12 per cent of the population is unemployed, with youth unemployment even higher, at 21 per cent; 80 per cent of jobs are vulnerable; and income inequality, as measured by the Gini coefficient, is high at 0.43, second only to Latin America.

13. The finalization of indicators and baselines for the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 is essential for a comprehensive assessment of progress made in the implementation of the two agendas. A report on the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals has been produced for the year 2016, replacing the regional Millennium Development Goals report. The 2016 transition report tracks progress made on the Goals, targets and indicators of the Millennium Development Goals; explains the factors behind successes or setbacks; sets out the strategies undertaken by some countries to achieve the Goals; and identifies best performers and lessons learned. The report also provides background information on the adoption of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; elaborates on the importance for the continent of aligning the two agendas; highlights the challenges associated with the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the new agendas; and provides information on African countries that have started the transition.

14. It is important for Africa to make a seamless transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals at all levels. In addition, the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals must be addressed. In this regard, it is important to reduce the gaps left by the non-achievement of Goal 8 of the Millennium Development Goals, "Develop a global partnership for development". Around 1.3 billion people globally continue to live in extreme poverty and the human development needs of many more have not been met. The achievement of the Millennium Development Goals has been uneven across geographical regions and very often it is the poorest, most marginalized and most discriminated against groups, such as women, young people, persons with disabilities and ethnic minorities, who have seen the least progress. The evolving global economic situation and the negative effects of climate change have also

severely hampered the achievement of all of the Millennium Development Goal targets.

15. Regarding the roll-out of the two agendas, the transition report indicates that countries are at different stages of the process of integrating the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 into their national development planning frameworks. Those whose planning cycles coincided with the start of the Sustainable Development Goals are at a more advanced stage of integration. Their experience could be helpful to those countries that are less advanced in the process.

2. Key messages

16. The Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development presents the following key messages on the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals:

(a) **The High-level Political Forum should ensure the revitalization of the global, regional and national partnerships — including South-South and tripartite cooperation, as well as involvement of the private sector, civil society organizations and other non-State actors — to accelerate sustainable development in Africa.** Specific efforts should be made to curb illicit financial flows and promote technology transfer and the data revolution.

(b) **The High-level Political Forum should ensure that development partners meet their official development assistance commitments to African countries, especially least developed countries, and align them to national priorities.** According to the 2016 transition report, official development assistance to Africa shows a downward trend, with most donor countries not fulfilling their commitments to provide 0.7 per cent of gross national income in official development assistance to developing countries. Particularly worrisome is the fact that the share of total official development assistance received by African least developed countries is declining.

(c) **The High-level Political Forum should encourage the sharing and dissemination of experiences and lessons learned in the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063.** The adoption of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda by African countries is an opportunity to complete the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals. A successful transition, however, requires integrated and coordinated institutional arrangements for implementation, strengthened capacities for data collection and analysis, and a monitoring and evaluation system that is horizontally (sectorally) and vertically (nationally) integrated. The institutional frameworks currently in place in countries that have embarked on the integration processes could serve as a foundation for learning and experience sharing.

B. Inclusive transformation and sustainable development

1. Background

17. The importance of an inclusive development agenda for shared global prosperity and well-being was clearly articulated in world leaders' pledge to ensure that no one is left behind in the 2030 Agenda. World leaders further committed to prioritizing the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable. Inclusion is also at the

core of Africa's growth and transformation vision, as encapsulated in Agenda 2063, which affirms the region's aspiration for a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development.

18. Ensuring inclusion in the context of sustainable development requires tackling the multidimensional drivers of exclusion related to access to opportunities, decision-making processes and human development outcomes, especially at community level. Taking these elements into account, both the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 contain commitments intended to ensure inclusion through access to opportunities, dialogue and engagement, as well as poverty eradication and reduction of inequality, both at national and sub-national levels.

2. Key messages

19. The Africa Regional Forum for Sustainable Development presents the following key messages for inclusive transformation towards sustainable development in Africa:

(a) **Accelerated investment in infrastructure, transport, irrigation, energy, science and technology, and information and communications technology, as well as extending the local value-adding, manufacturing and service sectors of Africa's economies through sustainable and industrial development, are essential for creating decent jobs and supporting social enterprises, which are fundamental for eradicating poverty and building inclusive societies.** In particular, there is a need to create decent jobs by diversifying away from and adding value to primary commodities, promoting exports, building the capabilities of domestic firms and fostering industrial clusters to compete in regional and global markets for manufactured goods.

(b) **Given that sustainable development is about catering to the present without compromising future needs, Africa's natural resources should be exploited in environmentally friendly and sustainable manner**, based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and the need for international assistance for African countries to help put them on sustainable pathways.

(c) **Higher levels of social investment and mobilization of resources at the global, regional and national levels are needed to improve skills and capacity-building through the provision of education, apprenticeships, training, adequate infrastructure, health care, and food and nutrition security.** This is especially urgent in the case of young people and women, many of whom work in the informal sector doing low-skilled jobs. Harnessing the demographic dividend requires a focus on high-quality education, skills development and healthcare, particularly for women and young people, to enhance their capacity to access decent jobs generated through structural transformation.

(d) **The High-level Political Forum must mobilize the necessary resources and assistance to support member States in addressing inequality and implement, where appropriate, redistributive policies that reduce disparities in wealth, income and access to public services.** Such policies should also include modernization of agriculture, food security, building community resilience, emergency preparedness and rural development. A key policy priority in this respect is social protection. By providing universal access to high-quality basic services,

social protection can enhance productivity and boost the incomes of vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, persons with disabilities and pregnant women, thereby reducing inequalities and eradicating stigma, and ultimately contributing to sustained economic growth.

(e) **The High-level Political Forum should help member States to put in place urgent and strategic measures to support the development of sustainable cities and to transform Africa's urban areas into drivers of inclusive growth and prosperity in safe and secure environments.** If well planned, urbanization offers considerable opportunities to enhance productivity, generate wealth, reduce crime and improve living standards. This requires a cross-sectoral approach to urbanization policy in the context of national development planning.

(f) **The High-level Political Forum should help member States to put in place adequate public policies and legislative and financing measures, and promote good governance and accountability, with a view to ensuring inclusive growth and transformation.** Inclusive outcomes will not be achieved as by-products of economic growth, but require targeted action backed by resources, while being positioned as intrinsic to overall development planning at the national and regional levels. It is critical to align and direct public expenditure towards targets for social and economic inclusion. For instance, promoting gender equality and women's empowerment requires specific policies and legislation backed by financing mechanisms. This must be supported by official development assistance and other official financial flows from donors, especially in countries that find it difficult to raise domestic resources or attract private investment, and countries experiencing protracted humanitarian crises, in order to support country-driven investment needs and regional priorities.

C. Integrated results framework and integrated implementation, including means of implementation for the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063

1. Background

20. In order to realize the aspirations, goals and targets of both agendas, countries have to own, domesticate and adopt effective national plans and implementation arrangements. While convergence between the two agendas is significant, integrated and coherent implementation of both agendas into national planning systems will be a major operational challenge.

21. Successful integrated implementation of both agendas must consider different national realities, capacities, levels of development and priorities. In addition, the need for inclusion, broad multi-stakeholder engagement, adequate financing, innovation, other means of implementation and modalities must be taken into account.

2. Key messages

22. The following are the key messages aimed at promoting inclusive and integrated implementation and mobilization of means of implementation for Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda.

(a) **In order to ensure an inclusive and participatory process, multi-stakeholder bodies and platforms at the national and subnational levels are necessary to enable African countries to effectively align and integrate the two agendas into national and subnational strategic frameworks.** Such bodies, which should comprise gender-responsive representation of Governments, private sector agencies, major groups and other stakeholders, will enable countries to effectively consult and take into account inputs from various interest groups. Moreover, such bodies would enhance multi-actor and multi-sectoral involvement and coordination in the implementation of the agendas within the framework of national development priorities.

(b) **Africa will need to mobilize unprecedented volumes of domestic resources to implement the two agendas; strengthening the capacities of African countries to mobilize such resources will be key, therefore, and should be fast-tracked and supported.** The focus should include fiscal resource mobilization; harnessing natural capital; the leveraging of the pool of African institutional savings; enhanced retail savings mobilization through financial inclusion; the curbing of illicit financial flows; and the reduction of inefficiency and governance or corruption-based financial leakages and wastages.

(c) **The High-level Political Forum should commit member States to implementing the Paris Agreement, in line with the principles and provisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, ensuring parity in the content and legal status of mitigation, adaptation and means of implementation (finance, technology transfer and capacity-building).** Climate change poses a serious risk to achieving the goals of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda. Urgent action is needed, therefore, to ensure that new and additional financial resources are mobilized under the commitments made in the Paris Agreement.

(d) **Coherent, strong, inclusive and coordinated bilateral and multilateral support, including international development cooperation, for the implementation, follow-up and monitoring of the two agendas at the various levels is needed.** United Nations agencies, regional and bilateral organizations and other partners, working in close consultation with the target beneficiaries, should align their programming with the requirements of the two agendas. The required support should be delivered in a coherent manner and through coordinated mechanisms. In the case of the United Nations, for instance, the collective actions and strategies of both the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa and the United Nations Country Teams are critical in augmenting the efforts of Governments to implement national development policies and plans, in line with the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks.

(e) **Partnerships are crucial to the mobilization and provision of the resources, capacity and technology required for the implementation of both agendas.** The recommendations contained in the African Union Commission's study on the partnership arrangements of the African Union, which included the

articulation of a strategic policy with respect to each of the strategic partners, should be supported and fully implemented.

(f) **In order to ensure that science, technology and innovation drive transformation, economic growth and sustainable development, African Governments will need to increase investment in the development of domestic technological capabilities, receive support through the transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms, and support industrialization initiatives, including green initiatives.** This will entail increased spending (including by the private sector) on research and development to at least 1 per cent of gross domestic product, with a view to improving the performance of national innovation systems and productivity competitiveness in the global market. A large portion of these resources should be devoted to environmentally friendly technologies.

(g) **Commitment by stakeholders to implement fast-track initiatives contained in the first 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063 will generate wins that will form a strong foundation and propel the implementation of both agendas.** Achieving early results from these initiatives will strengthen the commitment of all stakeholders to the agendas. It is vital, therefore, to mobilize and provide resources for the early implementation of fast-track interventions.

D. Integrated follow-up and review of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda

1. Background

23. The 2030 Agenda provides for follow-up and review at the global, regional and national levels, while Agenda 2063 does so at the regional, subregional and national levels. The shared end goal of the follow-up and review process is to ensure that countries stay on track and achieve the targets in a timely fashion. The follow-up and review processes of both agendas include accountability to citizens. To enhance effectiveness, linkages between the follow-up and review processes at the various levels, based on the principle of subsidiarity, could be explored.

24. At the global level, the High-level Political Forum will play a central role in overseeing a network of follow-up and review processes, working with the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other relevant organs and forums, in accordance with existing mandates. The follow-up and review process of the 2016 session of the Forum will promote the leveraging of financing and other means of implementation for the integrated implementation of the two agendas in Africa. The follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda will converge at the High-level Political Forum, while acknowledging the role of the annual Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up, which makes the High-level Political Forum a strategic platform for mobilization of the means of integrated implementation of the two agendas.

25. Africa needs to pursue a unified track to follow-up and review the implementation of the two agendas to avoid dual reporting obligations for member States and partners. A common regional-level set of indicators based on the integrated results framework will be indispensable to foster integrated follow-up and review at the regional level.

26. The regional economic communities will play an important role in supporting efforts towards implementation, follow-up and review of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda.

27. Both agendas recognize the centrality of national-level follow-up and review. Integrated follow-up and review of the two agendas at the national level will need to be properly nurtured by strengthening the relevant national processes and systems. The essential systems include those to ensure national ownership and inclusion in follow-up and review, as well as effective national monitoring and evaluation frameworks and statistical systems.

2. Key messages

28. The Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development presents the following key messages to enhance integrated follow-up and review of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda:

(a) **Global-level commitment and support is needed for the integrated implementation and follow-up of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda in Africa.** The review process during the High-level Political Forum should recognize the significant synergies and relationships between the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, and their importance in achieving sustainable development in Africa. It is for this reason that the two agendas are being implemented and followed up at the regional, subregional and national levels through integrated approaches. The High-level Political Forum should therefore promote processes and propose policy actions and recommendations, including on the provision of means of implementation, that pay attention to both agendas.

(b) **The follow-up and review process at the 2016 session of the High-level Political Forum is important to support Africa to leverage financing and other means of implementation for inclusive and integrated implementation of the two agendas.** The follow-up of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, led by the annual Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up, will converge with that of the 2030 Agenda during the session of the High-level Political Forum. The Forum is therefore a strategic platform for Africa to engage in and leverage finance and other means of implementation for the integrated implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda in Africa.

(c) **A unified follow-up platform at the regional level is essential to realizing the integrated follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.** Coordinated follow-up and review at the regional level will be the basis for Africa to interact with the High-level Political Forum and other relevant global-level follow-up processes with a unified and strong voice, with a view to enhancing integrated implementation and follow-up of the two agendas.

(d) **Concrete and reliable policies and actions at all levels to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and realize the aspirations of Agenda 2063 will be undergirded by national-level follow-up and review. Accordingly, integrated follow-up and review of the two agendas at the national level will require nurturing.** The African Union Commission, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank, in collaboration with other partners, will need to develop or help countries to adopt minimum sets of tools, including national-level integrated action plans and monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

(e) **Inclusive regional, subregional, national and subnational follow-up mechanisms that are voluntary and country-led are needed.** Both the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 emphasize inclusive follow-up at all levels. Strengthened national and subnational follow-up mechanisms guided by the abovementioned principles are therefore needed to foster effective inclusive review at all levels.

(f) **High-quality, disaggregated and timely data will be required to ensure evidence- and results-based inclusive regional and national follow-up and review.** Countries need to be supported to strengthen their national statistical systems and make them responsive to the data requirements for integrated follow-up and review of the two agendas. Such systems, which are driven by technology and adequate resources, are critical to ensure data readiness and underpin the measurement of progress, monitoring and evaluation, reporting and overall follow-up processes.

(g) **A global partnership for sustainable development data must be established though an intergovernmental process, as captured in the Secretary-General's report on the post-2015 development agenda, entitled "The road to dignity by 2030", and echoed in a decision adopted at the twenty-sixth ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union.**

(h) **Africa's partners should provide capacity, appropriate technology and technical and financial support to member states, the major groups and other stakeholders to complement progress made and bridge possible risks to the effective and efficient integration of the two agendas.**

E. Demographic dividend road map for 2017

1. Background

29. The demographic dividend has been recognized at various levels within the African political landscape as an important issue that lies at the heart of the continent's developmental agenda. The strong emphasis on the demographic dividend in the common African position on the post-2015 development agenda and the outcomes of key ministerial meetings, high-level events with African Heads of State and Government and other key processes led to the decision of the African Union to make the theme of the year 2017, "Harnessing the demographic dividend through investments in youth". This sends a clear message on the importance placed on the demographic dividend in Africa.

30. As Africa embarks on the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda, it is clear that the changing population structure will have far-reaching implications on the extent to which the aspirations and goals set forth in these agendas will be met. According to *World Population Prospects*, more than half of the world's population increase between 2016 and 2050 will occur in just nine countries of the world, including Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda. This shows the urgency that must guide Africa's investments in its young population today in order to position the continent towards harnessing the demographic dividend and meeting its development objectives.

31. To harness the demographic dividend, we need to build on existing platforms and ensure that reviews of the implementation of all regional outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits, including the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development in Africa beyond 2014, are synchronized with the sessions of the High-level Political Forum, to enable such reviews to contribute to the assessment of the integrated regional implementation, follow-up and review of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda.

32. Efforts to harness the demographic dividend would enable Africa to address effectively the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development. It is for this reason that African Heads of State and Government have called upon the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank, the NEPAD programme and the United Nations Population Fund to work with the African Union Commission in developing a road map with key deliverables and milestones that will guide countries and regional economic communities and help them to harness the demographic dividend.

2. Key messages

33. The following key messages are aimed at supporting Africa's efforts to harness the demographic dividend, as it is time to move from narrative to action in order to ensure that no one is left behind.

(a) **The strategic importance of the demographic dividend for Africa should be recognized and support mobilized for harnessing it in the implementation of Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030.** Given the demographic composition and projections for Africa, it is evident that making the right investments will strategically position the continent towards achieving Agenda 2063 and meeting the goals of Agenda 2030, which is central to creating a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development.

(b) **Support needs to be mobilized for efforts to harness Africa's demographic dividend at the global level, to ensure adequate resources and that robust implementation is supported by development partners.** The increasing interconnectivity between continents, and the firm understanding that the 2030 Agenda will only be considered as successful if the Sustainable Development Goals are met by all, calls for a strengthened global partnership between Africa and key development partners. Multilateral platforms such as the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions, the G20, the G7 and the so-called BRICS countries (Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa) need to work together to raise the profile and prioritize investments in youth and the enactment of policies that would help to harness the demographic dividend. This would help to address common challenges regarding migration and climate change.

(c) **Investment should be made in supporting evidence-based planning and decision-making at the country level.** There is a need to build the capacity of key institutions responsible for development planning at the national level, as well as mechanisms to strengthen the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development into development plans. Helping countries to better understand the relevance of population dynamics for sustainable development, including by conducting assessments that give a clear indication of the policy and programme interventions needed to spur high-impact and innovative solutions, remains critical. Using the evidence generated to develop targeted policies that address issues of

access to high-quality education, vocational training and skills development that is linked to the needs of the economy is crucial to harnessing the demographic dividend.

(d) **Improving access to sexual and reproductive health-care services across Africa and reducing mortality and fertility is key to achieving the demographic dividend.** Investing in increasing the access of women and girls to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including family planning, as well as investment in girls' education and empowerment, remain critical to reducing the fertility rate. Empowering girls has an important catalytic effect, as it contributes to reducing the incidence of early pregnancy, child marriage and female genital mutilation. As some African countries have already noted, including Côte d'Ivoire, there is a strong need to embark on a contraceptive revolution in Africa, as it remains central to all sustainable development efforts.

(e) **Young people should be involved in political decision-making through effective and responsible participation in political processes.**

(f) **There is a need to identify and monitor indicators linked to the demographic dividend, from both existing and emerging indicator frameworks such as the integrated results framework of Agenda 2063, the global Sustainable Development Goals indicator framework and other relevant thematic frameworks such as the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development beyond 2014.** These are crucial to measure the impact of policies and strategies aimed at harnessing the demographic dividend and monitoring progress over time.

(g) **The potential of urban migration to harness the demographic dividend should be leveraged by taking advantage of the economies of scale found in cities and urban centres, and the developmental impact of safe and orderly migration should be harnessed.** Internal and international migration represents considerable developmental potential in terms of filling skills gaps, easing labour market surplus and providing remittances.

F. Strengthening the form and work of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

34. The following key messages are aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the Forum:

(a) **It is crucial that the outcomes of the Forum take into account and are informed by review processes on the implementation of the two agendas that are carried out by various stakeholders, including regional and subregional organizations, mechanisms and forums, United Nations entities, the major groups and other partners.** Other reviews of, or relevant to, the implementation of the two agendas need to be synchronized with the work of the Forum to ensure that such reviews contribute to Africa's assessment of the regional implementation of both agendas. The work of the Forum should enable effective consideration of submissions and other inputs from such review processes.

(b) **Learning and sharing best practices among countries, within the United Nations system, and with other regional and subregional forums, major groups and organizations is important in accelerating the implementation of**

Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda; the Forum should include, therefore, mechanisms for learning and exchanging experiences. It is important that countries volunteering for review during the sessions of the High-level Political Forum are assisted to participate in the Africa Regional Forum, so that they can share their experiences and lessons learned. Case studies should be conducted to support learning and exchange. African countries should be supported and encouraged to participate and contribute in the various learning and sharing forums.

(c) **Effective linkages must be established between the follow-up and review processes at the subregional level with those at the national level, with the global review preferably drawing on the regional level.** The observance of the principle of subsidiarity is clearly provided for in the architecture for monitoring and evaluation of the first 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063. Accordingly, there are clear roles on reporting and feedback to and from the various levels, that is from national to subregional to continental.

III. Submission and presentation of the key messages

35. The second session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development requests the Economic Commission for Africa to submit the present key messages to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs as Africa's collective input to the 2016 session of the High-level Political Forum. The Africa Regional Forum further requests its Chair to transmit the key messages to the President of the Economic and Social Council and to present them during the 2016 session of the High-level Political Forum.

United Nations E/HLPF/2016/3/Add.4

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
8 June 2016

Original: English

High-level political forum on sustainable development
Convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council
11-20 July 2016

Input from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to the high-level political forum on sustainable development

Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat hereby transmits the input from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

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Please recycle

Report of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean at its thirty-sixth session on the establishment of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development

Background

1. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change will shape and direct the work of the Organization for decades to come.

2. The 2030 Agenda presents an unprecedented opportunity for Latin America and the Caribbean, given that it addresses some of the core structural challenges that the region faces. It calls for the eradication of poverty and extreme poverty, with productivity, decent work, social protection, education and health, and for new models and institutions under the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. It demands a renewed global governance to close asymmetries between countries and a global compact for financing and technology transfer. It proposes partnerships for a new development pattern, with a new equation between the State, society and the market and places equality at the centre of the development agenda. The latter is of particular relevance to Latin America and the Caribbean, the most unequal region in the world.

3. Given that the Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLAC) is the only intergovernmental body of the United Nations in Latin America and the Caribbean, it is also important for the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals to be integrated into the work of its subsidiary bodies,[1] to ensure that comprehensive support is provided to countries for their implementation, in collaboration with other regional agencies (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, Caribbean Community, Union of South American Nations, Organization of American States and Central American Integration System, among others). To achieve this, ECLAC has supported its member States for the establishment of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean for Sustainable Development.

4. Following the invitation to the regional commissions by the General Assembly to the work of the high-level political forum and the call in the 2030 Agenda for strong follow-up and review mechanisms, in April 2015, the Committee of the Whole of ECLAC, under the leadership of Peru as Chair, adopted resolution 695(PLEN.16-E) to initiate a consultation process for the establishment of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development. The Forum would be a regional mechanism to follow up and review

[1] The Regional Council for Planning of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning, the Statistical Conference of the Americas, the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Conference on Science, Innovation and Information and Communications Technologies, the Committee on South-South Cooperation, the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee and the Regional Seminar on Fiscal Policy.

the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, its means of implementation and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

Strengthening the regional architecture for monitoring the 2030 Agenda: Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development

5. Subsequently, a series of consultations were held in New York in 2016, under the leadership of Peru as Chair of the Committee of the Whole of ECLAC, which included 10 meetings with experts and the extensive participation of representatives of member States. ECLAC served as the secretariat for the process, which resulted in the adoption of a resolution by the Committee in April 2016, in which the countries welcomed the successful conclusion of the consultation process and transmitted to the Commission a draft resolution on the establishment of the Forum for its consideration and action during its thirty-sixth session (see annex).

6. From 23 to 27 May 2016, ECLAC invited high-level representatives of Governments to consider, at its thirty-sixth session, in Mexico, the establishment of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development.

7. The President of Mexico, two vice-presidents, 25 ministers, 14 vice-ministers from Latin America and the Caribbean and 40 delegations from the 37 member States and 3 associate members attended the session. Representatives of nine United Nations system organizations, six specialized agencies and 10 intergovernmental organizations also participated, as did representatives of 127 non-governmental organizations, 35 universities and 250 journalists.

8. On 27 May 2016, ECLAC member States adopted by acclamation resolution 700(XXXVI), entitled "Mexico resolution on the establishment of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development" (see annex). By that resolution, they established the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development as a regional mechanism to follow up and review the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals and related targets and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

9. Pursuant to resolution 700(XXXVI), the Forum will be led by States and open to all countries in the region and, recognizing the inclusive spirit of the 2030 Agenda, to all relevant actors, including civil society, the private sector and academic institutions. It will be convened under the auspices of ECLAC and guided by the principles established for all follow-up and review processes by the 2030 Agenda.

10. Also pursuant to the resolution, the Forum will build on existing platforms and mandates, avoiding duplications and the creation of additional structures, and within existing resources will promote coordination and coherence within the United Nations development system, and invite other relevant regional and subregional entities and international financial institutions to be involved in its meetings.

11. The Commission will issue an annual progress report to the Forum about the regional progress and challenges in implementing the 2030 Agenda and provide policy recommendations to be considered by the Forum. The report will be considered to be a regional contribution to the high-level political forum on

sustainable development convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council and its forum on financing for development follow-up.

12. In addition, ECLAC will prepare a quadrennial progress report for the consideration of the Forum as a regional contribution to the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly, consolidating and building on the progress and challenges identified in the preceding annual reports, in order to provide a broader analysis of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the regional level.

13. The report will provide an assessment of the regional progress and challenges in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, on the basis of agreed indicators and other contributions from the subsidiary bodies of the Commission,[1] and on national-level reviews, as appropriate, and will provide policy recommendations to be considered by the Forum.

14. The establishment of the Forum brings forth an important opportunity for collaboration among equals to discuss lesson learned, exchange good practices and discuss common priorities, concerns and aspirations. In addition, the Forum will become a main coordinating entity to build upon the already existing network of regional institutions and mechanisms in Latin America and the Caribbean (see figure below). Given that it receives a wide variety of input from sectoral entities from the region, the Forum will systematically facilitate an inclusive, integrated and multidisciplinary approach to the implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, in line with the holistic spirit of those agendas.

15. The Forum, in accordance with resolution 700(XXXVI), should provide useful opportunities for peer learning, including through voluntary reviews, the sharing of best practices and discussion of shared targets, benefiting from the cooperation of the regional and subregional commissions and organizations in order to guide an inclusive regional process.

16. The resolution points to at least 16 actions through which the Forum will contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

17. Among the 16 actions, the resolution highlights the strengthening of coordination, the promotion of cooperation and the provision of political guidance through recommendations for sustainable development at the regional level, together with the fostering of the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in a holistic and cross-sectoral manner.

18. The particular focus will be on the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions, the promotion of sustained, equitable and inclusive economic growth, including sustainable consumption and production patterns, the reduction of inequality and the promotion of social inclusion, the recognition of cultural diversity and of the role of culture as a crucial enabler of sustainable development, the protection and sustainable use of the environment and the promotion of good living in harmony with nature.

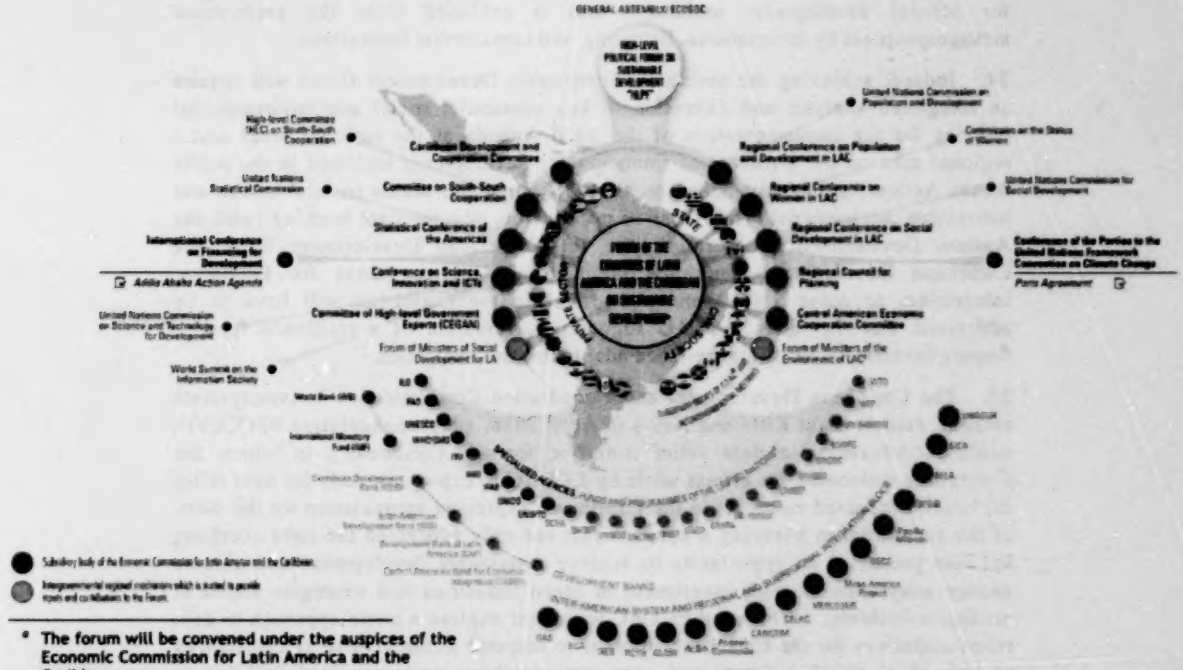
19. In the resolution, the Commission stressed that the Forum would recognize the special needs and particular challenges of landlocked developing countries, small-island developing States, middle-income countries, least developed countries and

countries in situations of conflict and post-conflict, in order to respond to the universal character of the 2030 Agenda.

20. Lastly, the Forum is encouraged to guarantee the participation of all relevant stakeholders, including civil society organizations, academic institutions and the private sector.

21. Organizations and networks of civil society that participated in the event appreciated the establishment of the Forum as a very significant step for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the regional level.

Strengthening the regional architecture for the implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda: the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development


GENERAL ASSEMBLY ECOSOC
HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT "HLPF"
United Nations Commission on Population and Development
High-level Committee (HLC) on South-South Cooperation
Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee
Regional Conference on Population and Development in LAC
Commission on the Status of Women
United Nations Statistical Commission
Committee on South-South Cooperation
Regional Conference on Women in LAC
United Nations Commission for Social Development
Statistical Conference of the Americas
Regional Conference on Social Development in LAC
International Conference on Financing for Development
Addis Ababa Action Agenda
Conference on Science, Innovation and ICTs
Regional Council for Planning
Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
Paris Agreement
United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development
Committee of High-level Government Experts (CEGAN)
Central American Economic Cooperation Committee
Forum of Ministers of Social Development for LA
Forum of Ministers of the Environment of LAC
World Summit on the Information Society
FORUM OF THE COUNTRIES OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
SPECIALIZED AGENCIES, FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM
DEVELOPMENT BANKS
INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM AND REGIONAL AND SUBREGIONAL INTEGRATION BLOCS
Subsidiary body of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
Intergovernmental regional mechanism which is invited to provide inputs and contributions to the Forum

[a] The forum will be convened under the auspices of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

[b] Owing to space considerations, some names have been abbreviated. For a complete list of subsidiary bodies of ECLAC visit http://www.cepal.org/en/organos-subsidiarios.

[c] The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean acts as secretariat. The Forum also has an interagency Technical Committee composed of UNEP, the United Nations Development Programme, ECLAC, the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank.

[d] This is a non-exhaustive list. For a complete list of specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations visit http://www.unsceb.org/content/unsystemchart-dp-2015.

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), "Establishment of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development", resolution adopted at the thirty-sixth session of ECLAC, 27 May 2016.

Proposed guiding actions of the Commission for the implementation and follow-up of global agreements

22. The year 2016 marks the beginning of the implementation of these historical agreements. Given that the implementation of the agreements will be led mainly at the national level, ECLAC proposes a series of actions that can be grouped in four main categories to respond to the challenges and opportunities that this new phase poses and the challenge of "ensuring that no one is left behind".

Strengthening the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the regional level

23. To ensure the successful implementation of the global development agenda, adequate means of implementation are essential for Latin America and the Caribbean, which is a middle-income region that, for the most part, is not eligible for official development assistance and is excluded from the preferential arrangements set by international financing and commercial institutions.

24. Indeed, achieving the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals will require an integrated analysis and execution of key economic, social and environmental policies for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national level and a regional take on the elements of financing for development included in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (financing, technology, fair trade, access to information and innovative mechanisms). The issues of tax evasion, development banking (with the Andean Development Corporation, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Caribbean Development Bank and the Central American Bank for Economic Integration, to name a few) and debt relief in the Caribbean will have to be addressed. For the latter, ECLAC suggests the creation of a resilience fund to finance investment for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

25. The Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee, at its twenty-sixth session, held in Saint Kitts and Nevis in April 2016, adopted resolution 93(XXVI), entitled "Advancing a debt relief initiative for the Caribbean", in which the Committee welcomed the efforts made by ECLAC to explore options for debt relief for heavily indebted countries in the Caribbean; expressed appreciation for the work of the secretariat in pursuing a solution that not only addressed the debt overhang but also presented an opportunity to achieve sustainable development and climate change adaptation through investment in green industries and strategies aimed at resilience-building; encouraged ECLAC to further explore a menu approach to debt relief initiatives for the Caribbean in order to respond to the diverse circumstances of individual member States and associate members; and requested ECLAC to support the creation of an inter-agency task force to elaborate the details of a proposed debt swap mechanism.[2]

Supporting the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals into national development plans and budgets

26. One of the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda is planning, whose role is clearly set forth in the Agenda. Accordingly, the countries conferred a mandate upon ECLAC, through its subsidiary body, the Regional Council for Planning of the

[2] For a proposal on debt for climate adaptation swaps, see http://cdcc.cepal.org/26/sites/default/files/eclac_proposal_on_debt_for_climate_adaptation_swaps.pdf.

Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning, to prioritize those actions in its programme of work that will help to align planning processes and instruments with the Agenda.[3]

27. In its resolution CRP/XV/01, the Regional Council for Planning acknowledged the importance of public management and planning for development as instruments to carry forward the 2030 Agenda in the region and, in that context, requested the Institute to continue to pursue applied research, technical cooperation, advisory work and training relating to the mainstreaming of the Agenda in planning for development; and requested the Institute, pursuant to resolution CRP/XIV/01, to continue its efforts to strengthen planning in Latin America and the Caribbean, by

(a) Disseminating knowledge and analysis of development plans and programmes;

(b) Sharing knowledge and collaborating regarding experiences and good practices in the use of planning instruments, methodologies and tools;

(c) Building capacities for the implementation, follow-up and evaluation of the Agenda in the region.

28. To ensure an integrated approach to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the creation of national inter-agency and intersectoral architectures at the highest level would facilitate the implementation of and follow-up to the Agenda, with its economic, social and environmental dimensions. Furthermore, to ensure the long-term alignment between the global and national agendas, the Sustainable Development Goals could be integrated into national and local planning schemes, taking into account tax, budget and public investment matters. Capacity-building through seminars, courses and technical assistance at the regional, national and subnational levels could be offered to assist countries with this integration. Lastly, the development of a regional observatory on planning for sustainable development, including a regional repository of national development plans, would be helpful to ensure that good practices and lessons learned are shared among countries.

29. The creation of such national, inter-agency and intersectoral architecture will be supported to facilitate the integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, to promote the exchange of experiences and best practices in creating interministerial forums, based on successful experiences in some of the countries of the region, and to address the challenges of the 2030 Agenda by promoting dialogue between the countries with a view to cooperation and mutual learning.

30. The integration of the Sustainable Development Goals into national and territorial planning systems will be supported, including on taxation, budgets and public investment. At least 19 Governments in the region have medium-term or long-term development strategies, and the task of aligning these strategies with the Goals represents an important step towards building sustainable development in the region.

31. The Commission will support capacity-building through seminars, workshops, courses and technical assistance at the regional, national and subnational levels. Implementing the 2030 Agenda will require the creation and strengthening of

[3] See resolution CRP/XV/01, adopted by the Regional Council for Planning at its fifteenth meeting, held in Yachay, Ecuador, on 19 November 2015.

capacity in the public sector and among other stakeholders. It will also develop a regional observatory on planning for sustainable development, including the Latin American and Caribbean Planning Repository. The observatory is conceived as a platform capable of accommodating all regional planning instruments, with a view to monitoring the implementation, follow-up and review processes of the Agenda, as well as national budget allocations linked to progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

Strengthening statistical capacities for monitoring the 2030 Agenda

32. To truly measure that no one is left behind during the implementation, follow-up and review phases of the 2030 Agenda, adequate statistics and statistical capabilities are paramount. This implies promoting statistical principles and good practices and maintaining the quality, integrity and timeliness of data while protecting and ensuring privacy and rights relating to data and reducing gaps in access, use and data literacy. Strengthening regional and national data ecosystems and data innovation networks with the private sector and civil society and promoting regional and South-South cooperation and systems for exchanging data at the regional and interregional levels will be necessary.

33. The Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, which promotes the design of national and regional statistical development strategies and linkages between statistical agendas at the global, regional and national levels, is a very relevant platform to achieve this. Furthermore, ECLAC suggests the promotion of a regional platform on data and statistics for sustainable development, with an ongoing dialogue on regional review of and follow-up to the Sustainable Development Goals with the members from the region of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

34. In accordance with the mandate received from the member countries at the eighth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC,[4] held in Quito in November 2015, the Commission promotes national and regional strategies for the development of statistics with a view to improving the collection, processing, disaggregation, dissemination and analysis of good quality statistics — both traditional and non-traditional — for the construction of the proposed indicators for the follow-up to and review of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and their 169 targets.

35. To increase the capacity of national statistical systems to meet the demands of the 2030 Agenda, the Commission proposes:

(a) To confer a mandate upon the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC to mainstream the statistical requirements of the Sustainable Development Goals in its programme of work;

(b) To support the Latin American and Caribbean member countries of the Inter-Agency Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by establishing the Statistical

[4] See resolution 9(VIII) and the Mitad del Mundo Declaration of the eighth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC.

Coordination Group for the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean, in the framework of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, to coordinate and plan activities on data and statistics relating to the Sustainable Development Goal indicators in the region;

(c) To strengthen national statistical capacities through technical assistance, the development of methodologies and the use of international standards;

(d) To promote regional and South-South cooperation and regional and interregional mechanisms for exchanging data on the Goals;

(e) To strengthen regional and national data ecosystems, enhancing innovation and technology networks, with possible private sector and civil society participation, to promote data openness, incorporate non-traditional data such as administrative records, big data and data from civil society, and to improve geographical information and visualization and geo-referencing tools.

Annex

700(XXXVI) Mexico resolution on the establishment of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean,

Recalling resolution 695(PLEN.16-E) adopted by the Committee of the Whole at its sixteenth extraordinary session held in Santiago on 16 April 2015, in which the Committee decided to launch a regional consultation process aimed at establishing the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development at the thirty-sixth session of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in 2016,

Recalling also resolution 696(PLEN.31) adopted by the Committee of the Whole at its thirty-first session, held in New York on 28 April 2016, in which the countries welcomed the successful conclusion of the regional consultation process aimed at establishing the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development,

Having examined the draft report of the thirty-first session of the Committee of the Whole,

1. *Decides* to establish the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development in accordance with the outcome of the thirty-first session of the Committee of the Whole, as set forth in the annex to this resolution.

Annex

Resolution of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean on the establishment of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean,

Recalling resolution 695(PLEN.16-E) of its Committee of the Whole, through which, inter alia, a regional consultation process was launched with the aim of establishing the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development at the thirty-sixth session of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in 2016,

Welcoming General Assembly resolution 70/1, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", in which it adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets, and reaffirmed its commitment to working tirelessly for the full implementation of this Agenda by 2030, its recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, and its commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions — economic, social and environmental — in a balanced and integrated manner, and to building upon the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and seeking to address their unfinished business,

Recalling that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, inter alia, recognizes the importance of building on existing follow-up and review mechanisms at the regional level and allowing adequate policy space, encourages all Member States to identify the most suitable regional forum in which to engage, as well as United Nations regional commissions to continue supporting Member States in this regard, and establishes guiding principles for follow-up and review processes at all levels, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development, respecting policy space and priorities, while remaining consistent with international rules and commitments, and recognizing that the outcome from national-level processes will be the foundation for reviews at the regional and global levels, given that the global review will be primarily based on national official data sources,

Welcoming General Assembly resolution 69/313, entitled "Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development", which, inter alia, commits Member States to fully engage, nationally, regionally and internationally, in ensuring proper and effective follow-up of the financing for development outcomes and all the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and encourages the United Nations regional commissions, in cooperation with regional banks and organizations, to mobilize their expertise and existing mechanisms, which could focus on thematic aspects of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 61/16 and 68/1, which, inter alia, urge the United Nations regional commissions to contribute, within their mandates, to the review of progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of

the major United Nations conferences and summits, and resolution 66/288, in which countries agreed to strengthen the Economic and Social Council as a principal body in the integrated and coordinated follow-up of the outcomes of all major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social, environmental and related fields,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 67/290, which, inter alia, acknowledges the importance of the regional dimension of sustainable development, and invites the United Nations regional commissions to contribute to the work of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, including through annual regional meetings, with the involvement of other relevant regional entities, major groups and other relevant stakeholders, as appropriate,

Emphasizing the importance of establishing a regional forum to follow up and review progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including for, inter alia, strengthening coherence and coordination, promoting cooperation and providing policy guidance, fostering national capacity-building, hosting voluntary State-led national reviews, identifying regional gaps, emerging challenges and shared targets, fostering peer learning by sharing good practices, experiences and lessons learned, helping to mobilize the necessary means of implementation, encouraging participation of all relevant stakeholders, providing a platform for partnerships, favouring people-centred policies and actions, transparency and accountability, and promoting the development, dissemination, diffusion and transfer of environmentally sound technologies,

Recognizing that there are different approaches, visions, models and tools available to each country, in accordance with its national circumstances and priorities, to achieve sustainable development; and reaffirming that planet Earth and its ecosystems are our common home and that "Mother Earth" is a common expression in a number of countries and regions,

Emphasizing the importance of system-wide strategic planning, implementation and reporting in order to ensure coherent and integrated support by the United Nations development system for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and of the financing for development processes, including at the regional level, taking into account other regional and subregional processes promoting the impact of international development cooperation,

Taking into consideration the special needs and particular challenges of landlocked developing countries, and recognizing the special sustainable development challenges facing small island developing States, middle-income countries, least developed countries, countries in situations of conflict and post-conflict countries,

Taking note with appreciation of the Note by the secretariat of the Commission,[a] prepared in fulfilment of resolution 695(PLEN.16-E) adopted by the Committee of the Whole,

1. *Decides* to establish the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development as a regional mechanism to follow up and review the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

[a] LC/L.4123.

including the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, its means of implementation, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda;

2. *Decides also* that the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development will be State-led and open to the participation of Latin American and Caribbean countries, and that it should provide useful opportunities for peer learning, including through voluntary reviews, the sharing of best practices and discussion on shared targets, benefiting from the cooperation of regional and subregional commissions and organizations, in order to guide an inclusive regional process drawing on national-level reviews and contributing to follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda at the global level, including at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and at the Economic and Social Council Forum on Financing for Development Follow-up, as appropriate;

3. *Reaffirms* that the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development will be guided by the principles established for all follow-up and review processes by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

4. *Decides* that the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development will build on existing platforms and mandates, avoiding duplications and the creation of additional structures, and that within existing resources it will promote coordination and coherence within the United Nations development system, and invite other relevant regional and subregional entities and international financial institutions to be involved in its meetings, as appropriate, while addressing the three dimensions of sustainable development in an integrated and balanced manner, and in these regards further decides that:

(a) The Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development will be informed by the following subsidiary bodies of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, as appropriate:

(i) The Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean,

(ii) The Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee,

(iii) The Regional Council for Planning of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning,

(iv) The Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean,

(v) The Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean,

(vi) The Conference on Science, Innovation and Information and Communications Technologies,

(vii) The Committee on South-South Cooperation,

(viii) The Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean,

(ix) The Committee of High-Level Government Experts, and

(x) The Central American Economic Cooperation Committee,

(b) Other relevant intergovernmental regional mechanisms, including the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean and the Forum of Ministers of Social Development of Latin America, are invited to provide inputs and contributions and inform the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, within their existing mandates, on their work related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda,

(c) The regional offices of the United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes are also invited to participate and engage in the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development in a coordinated manner, including through the submission of contributions to be reflected in annual progress reports of the Commission, and the presentation of their efforts in supporting and assisting the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda,

(d) Relevant international financial institutions, including regional and subregional development banks, are also invited to participate and engage in the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, including through the presentation of their efforts in supporting and assisting the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, as appropriate,

(e) The Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development will take into account, as appropriate, the outcomes related to sustainable development agreed by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, including its 2025 Plan on Food Security, Nutrition and Eradication of Hunger;

5. *Stresses* that the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development will recognize the special needs and particular challenges of landlocked developing countries, and the special sustainable development challenges facing small island developing States, middle-income countries, least developed countries, countries in situations of conflict and post-conflict countries, in order to address the universal character of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

6. *Highlights* that the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development will be convened under the auspices of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and that it will contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by, inter alia:

(a) Strengthening coordination, promoting cooperation and providing political guidance through recommendations for sustainable development at the regional level,

(b) Fostering the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in a holistic and cross-sectoral manner, with a particular focus on the

eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions, the promotion of sustained, equitable and inclusive economic growth, including sustainable consumption and production patterns, the reduction of inequalities and the promotion of social inclusion, the recognition of cultural diversity and of the role of culture as a crucial enabler of sustainable development, the protection and sustainable use of the environment, and the promotion of good living in harmony with nature,

(c) Assessing progress on the regional implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including through the consideration of annual reports issued by the secretariat of the Commission to be based, as appropriate, on the global indicators framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and targets agreed upon by the United Nations Statistical Commission, and on other relevant indicators for regional, national and subnational levels of monitoring developed at the regional and national levels, taking also into account the indicators encompassed under the operational guidelines for implementing the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, as appropriate. All indicators should be based to the greatest extent possible on comparable and standardized official national statistics provided by the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and, when other sources and methodologies are used, these will be reviewed and agreed upon by national statistical authorities and presented in a transparent manner,

(d) Following-up and reviewing the implementation of the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (Samoa Pathway) at the regional level,

(e) Assessing the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024 at the regional level,

(f) Promoting international cooperation and national capacity-building for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including through South-South and triangular cooperation, and other modalities of cooperation in order to strengthen and complement traditional modalities of cooperation,

(g) Hosting voluntary State-led national reviews,

(h) Identifying regional gaps, emerging challenges and shared targets for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and targets,

(i) Fostering peer learning by sharing good practices, experiences and lessons learned,

(j) Helping to mobilize the necessary means of implementation for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and targets,

(k) Encouraging the participation of all relevant stakeholders, including civil society, academia and the private sector, in accordance with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda,

(l) Providing a platform for partnerships for sustainable development,

(m) Favouring people-centred policies and actions, transparency and accountability,

(n) Promoting the coordination and coherence of national development plans and strategies with global frameworks,

(o) Contributing to the guidance provided by the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council and of the General Assembly, as well as of the Economic and Social Council Forum on Financing for Development Follow-up, as appropriate,

(p) Promoting, at the regional level, the development, dissemination, diffusion and transfer of environmentally sound technologies, and stepping up regional cooperation and collaboration in science, research, technology and innovation, including through public-private and multi-stakeholder partnerships, and on the basis of common interest and mutual benefit, focusing on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;

7. *Decides* that the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development will be convened annually, as appropriate, by the Chair of the Committee of the Whole of the Commission. It will be supported by the secretariat of the Commission, and aligned with the schedules, working programmes and themes of the Economic and Social Council, of the latter's Forum on Financing for Development Follow-up, and of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, as appropriate;

8. *Requests* the secretariat of the Commission to issue an annual progress report, four weeks in advance of the respective meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development. The report will be considered a regional contribution for the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council and its Forum on Financing for Development Follow-up, as appropriate, and will assess the regional progress and challenges in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, on the basis of agreed indicators and other relevant contributions from the subsidiary bodies of the Commission, and on national-level reviews, as appropriate, and it will provide policy recommendations to be considered by the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development;

9. *Also requests* the secretariat of the Commission to prepare a quadrennial progress report, to be considered by the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development as a regional contribution to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development under the auspices of the General Assembly, consolidating and building on the progress and challenges identified in the preceding annual reports, in order to provide a broader analysis of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the regional level;

10. *Encourages* the Latin American and Caribbean countries to submit, through the Forum, its intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations, and a summary produced by its Chair, as appropriate:

- To the High-level Political Forum under the auspices of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, as part of the regional contributions to the global follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,
- To the Economic and Social Council Forum on Financing for Development Follow-up, as part of the regional contributions to the global follow-up process of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda,

– To the United Nations Regional Coordination Mechanism;

11. *Highlights* the participatory and inclusive character of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which encourages the participation of all relevant stakeholders, including civil society organizations, academia and the private sector, and in this regard encourages the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development to ensure institutionalized multi-stakeholder participation following the relevant provisions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Economic and Social Council;

12. *Encourages* the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean to volunteer for national reviews, and the Forum to further develop modalities for hosting them in accordance with the related principles and guidelines provided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

United Nations E/HLPF/2016/3/Add.5

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
13 June 2016

Original: English

High-level political forum on sustainable development
Convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council
11-20 July 2016

Input from the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development to the high-level political forum on sustainable development

Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat hereby transmits the input from the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development to the high-level political forum on sustainable development, as agreed at the third session of the Arab Forum, organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia in Amman on 29 and 30 May 2016.

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Report of the 2016 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development Amman, 29 and 30 May 2016

[Original: Arabic]

I. Introduction

1. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), in partnership with the League of Arab States, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and other Regional Coordination Mechanism members, and in cooperation with the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, organized the 2016 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development in on 29 and 30 May 2016.

2. The Forum is a high-level regional platform for dialogue and coordination of mechanisms for the implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Arab region, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 15 September 2015 entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". Accordingly, at its twenty-eighth session in Tunis from 15 to 18 September 2014, ESCWA adopted resolution 314 (XXVIII) on the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development. In that resolution, it requested that the secretariat hold the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development periodically, in partnership with the League of Arab States and other organizations concerned with sustainable development, in order to prepare for the sessions of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, to review the progress made in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and to help launch regional partnerships to advance sustainable development in the Arab region. At its second meeting, held in Amman from 14 to 16 December 2015, the Executive Committee of ESCWA adopted resolution 322 recommending support for the Member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda. In that same resolution, it also requested the secretariat to hold the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development and to monitor progress made in the Arab region towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, prepare regional reports, assist the countries of the region in integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into their development plans, support statistical systems and follow up at the regional level.

3. The 2016 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development builds on the success of the two previous Forum sessions, held in Amman in 2014 and in Manama in 2015, and the leadership role of ESCWA and its partners in promoting regional dialogue and consensus-building during Arab preparations for the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

4. This year, the Forum focused on the following key issues:

(a) Promoting an understanding of the complementarity and interconnectedness of the four elements of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, so that Arab States can establish their priorities and pursue integrated development approaches in respect of planning, implementation, follow-up and review;

(b) Consideration of the implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the national level, as well as setting

priorities and identifying obstacles to implementation and monitoring, and deciding how such obstacles should be addressed;

(c) Stressing that regional efforts must be consistent with and complement national planning and implementation efforts, with a view to accelerating implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals;

(d) Setting forth the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing and following up on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, reviewing the organizational aspects and future work of the Forum, and identifying ways to strengthen the Forum's role as an essential component of the regional institutional follow-up and review framework.

5. Extraordinary efforts are needed to deal with this extremely trying period in the Arab region. Thus, a key question posed by forum participants was how to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in conditions of occupation, war, conflict, migration, forced displacement and the destruction of natural resources, infrastructure, the economy, society and values. After discussion, they suggested that the question should be formulated in a positive way: is it possible to respond to conflict, war, occupation, scarce resources and inadequate management without implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development? Put that way, the participants thought that the 2030 Agenda was the means by which the prevailing reality could be changed.

6. The presentations made at the Forum, as well as the information set out in communications received from Member States in preparation for the Forum, showed that most Arab States had responded in various ways to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and had made effective contributions to the preparations leading up to the adoption of the Agenda, either through the active participation of the Group of Arab States in the work of the Open Working Group for the post-2015 agenda or through League of Arab States mechanisms and regional civil society consultations. Those efforts culminated in the convening of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development in Amman in 2014 and in Bahrain in 2015. In its resolution 631, the summit of the League of Arab States welcomed all the aforementioned efforts and requested the Secretariat of the League of Arab States to continue working with all partners, including United Nations organizations and specialized agencies, to support the efforts of Arab States to implement the Agenda by 2030.

7. Most Arab States are still seeking to develop institutional frameworks for preparing and adopting national sustainable development plans, frameworks that are nationally owned and led; achieve optimal results, so as to ensure inclusiveness, coordination and integration; and are close to decision-making centres and linked to national planning mechanisms and structures. This is also true for the review and follow-up mechanisms that are still being studied. This is to be expected, as the Agenda went into effect only recently, at the beginning of 2016. It is therefore unrealistic to expect quantitative monitoring of progress towards the goals and targets, particularly since the list of indicators has not yet been finalized. Arab States recognize the importance of strengthening the capacities of statistics organizations and improving the comprehensiveness and quality of data, as well as the methods for the collection and dissemination thereof. Two Arab States, Egypt and Morocco, have offered to be part of the first group of States to submit voluntary national follow-up reports to the high-level political forum for 2016.

8. Forum participants drafted a number of letters for submission to the high-level political forum on sustainable development that the Economic and Social Council will convene from 11 to 20 July 2016 under the theme "Ensuring that no one is left behind". The outcomes of the 2016 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development will be submitted to the twenty-ninth ministerial session of ESCWA in September 2016. In parallel to what is going on in other regions, the letters were drafted from the perspective of the Arab region and as a regional contribution to the formulation of global processes.

9. The messages that Forum participants decided to address to the high-level political forum on sustainable development covered the following aspects:

(a) The Arab perspective on global frameworks and processes;

(b) Cooperation and integration among States and partners in the Arab region;

(c) Implementation, follow-up and review at the national level;

(d) The Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

II. Key messages to the high-level political forum on sustainable development

The Arab perspective on global frameworks and processes

10. Achieving sustainable development in the Arab region and the meeting the requirements of this transformative Agenda require a change how development issues are addressed and in production and consumption patterns at the individual and community levels, and in choices and policies. Effecting such change is challenging, but the Arab States are truly committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda.

11. The Agenda is integrated, interlinked and indivisible. None of its four components, particularly the Preamble and the Declaration, should be overlooked, and all stages of planning, implementation and follow-up must be consistent. The 2016 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development emphasizes that, as stated in the Declaration, there are three interlinked and equally important universal challenges that must be addressed in a balanced and effective way, namely, peace and security; poverty and inequality; and environmental degradation, climate change and natural disasters. The Forum also emphasizes the importance of justice at the national, regional and international levels.

12. Human rights are the foundation of the 2030 Agenda and of development plans that leave no one behind. This commitment to human rights principles applies to all development stakeholders, including the private sector, civil society and governments. This commitment will have a direct impact at the national, regional and international levels when examining options and the trade-offs between benefits and the right to set policy. Innovative solutions and non-traditional policymaking are required, as well as a medium-term and long-term perspective when assessing feasibility and results.

13. The right to development is one of the fundamental rights enshrined in the 2030 Agenda and it applies to individuals, groups and peoples and countries. This is something that is very important, particularly with respect to the right to self-determination, sovereignty over natural resources and the right to freely choose national development paths and reject unilateral economic sanctions that obstruct development. This definition of the right to development, which dates back to 1986, is of vital importance to the Arab region and developing countries, and must be accorded the status it deserves.

14. Successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires the concerted efforts of all national, regional and international development stakeholders. It also requires an international partnership based on respect, equality and commitment to the rights system and to the 2030 Agenda and its terms of reference. The Forum underlines the centrality of partnership among governments, civil society and the private sector as a key component of development and development work.

15. The cultural and political dimensions are two key components of the development process and of any development strategy, together with the economic, social and environmental dimensions. It is extremely important not to lose sight of these two dimensions in the contemporary world and in the Arab region in particular, given the complex cultural and political problems facing the region. Like the rest of the world, the Arab world has rich cultures and a vast heritage that should not be ignored. Indeed, they should serve as the basis for a better future for Arab peoples and the world.

16. It is also important not to ignore economic, social, demographic and geographical structural challenges, as create inequality and affect not only the performance levels of countries, but also the choices they make. All national development partners, including governmental and non-governmental organizations and the private sector, must work together in order to protect the national policy space, which is under pressure from globalization. Alongside the international obligation to respect State sovereignty and the provision of development aid, protecting the national policy space is a prerequisite for the right to development and the success of the national development strategy.

17. Global plans are only truly universal to the extent that they reflect and give expression to the critical issues affecting the countries of the various regions of the world. The practical application of the global agenda in any region must take into account regional and national priorities and the relevant issues — which, in the Arab world, are occupation, war and conflict and their repercussions — but without losing sight of such issues as poverty, inequality, demographics, environmental degradation, climate change and good governance.

Cooperation and integration among States and partners in the Arab region

18. The Arab region is suffering from acute and extremely difficult crises stemming from various wars and conflicts, including the continued Israeli occupation of Palestine and other Arab territories. Those crises have brought about material, economic and social destruction, moral decline and political collapse in a number of States. They have also created refugees, displacement, forced migration and humanitarian problems that have spread to other States in the region and to

neighbouring regions. Those crises need major attention in the form of humanitarian and development-oriented interventions that focus on the needs of women in armed conflict and based on true regional and international partnership.

19. Support should be provided for least developed countries and countries suffering from occupation, war, conflict and disasters, which include approximately half of the Arab States. The region cannot make progress on the path to development while half of it remains mired in conflicts that prevent it from even joining the development process. In order to push development forward in the Arab region, a qualitative breakthrough in development must be achieved in the least developed countries, something that can only happen if conflict, war, occupation and unilateral economic sanctions are brought to an end.

20. Goal 16 is crucial to the Arab region because it concerns security, peace and good governance, including combating corruption, modernizing administration and increasing transparency and access to information. There can be no security or peace without good governance, and vice versa. Human rights, good governance and an awareness of the interconnectedness of peace, security and sustainable development should all be at the heart of the transformative process in the region. We must also not overlook the international dimension of governance issues, including increased representation for developing countries in global structures, stemming the flow of arms and illicit financial flows, and the recovery of stolen assets.

21. The question of demographics is of paramount importance in the Arab region, where most countries are undergoing major demographic transformations. There have been unprecedented population movements caused by immigration, emigration, displacements and refugees, with all the attendant negative impacts on the lives of the migrants, displaced persons and refugees themselves. At the same time, there has been a natural change in demographic makeup caused by such factors as high birth rates. These dynamics highlight the need for a different approach that responds to the development needs of young people, who are a majority in many Arab countries, and the needs of other demographic groups identified in the 2030 Agenda, including children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.

22. Gender equality and women's empowerment should be urgent priorities for the Arab region. The gender gap is sizable in a number of areas, and indicators show contradictory trends. For example, while there have been improvements in participation rates, legislative development and education and health indicators, employment has stagnated or even shrunk. Widespread violence against women and girls has had a negative impact on the situation of women, and is indicative of a troubling regression in social and cultural norms. The Forum regarded closing the gender gap and empowering women in all areas to be success criteria for inclusive sustainable development.

23. Realization of the Sustainable Development Goals will require genuine and effective inclusion of women. The role played by women in all 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals should be monitored with a view to making clear that they are not only victims but also contributors. Their role must be recognized and reflected in government policies, with special focus on the needs of women in armed conflict.

24. The well-being and prosperity of people should be the primary goal of economic development. Economic development should be linked to job creation, suitable working conditions, expansion of the economic development base to all regions and sectors, increased productivity and environmental protection. Ending unemployment and providing jobs, social protection and health care should be priorities in the Arab region, where rates of unemployment among youth, and especially young women, are the highest in the world.

25. Improving education at all levels, supporting scientific research and technology, and encouraging innovation should be major development priorities in the region, not only in order to develop human capital but also to achieve other Sustainable Development Goals.

26. Development planning should take into account the linkages among the goals relating to the environment, natural resources, climate change and economic and social objectives. Given the regional and cross-border nature of the water, energy, agriculture and food security challenges facing the countries of the region, cooperation must be stepped up to develop solutions and policies that ensure sustainable resources and a life of dignity for all. In that connection, we take note of the outcomes of the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly held in Nairobi from 23 to 27 May 2016 on the theme of "Delivering on the Environmental Dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".

27. Disaster risk reduction and sustainable development are closely related. The Arab road map for implementing the Sendai Framework for disaster risk reduction should be put into effect through national strategies and frameworks for managing risk and building resilience with a view to reducing existing risks, averting new risks and ensuring sustainability. Doing so will require the creation of appropriate coordination and financing mechanisms.

28. Development should be funded from various national, regional and international sources. Given international trends, particularly the significant decrease in financing for development, it is imperative to find new ways to provide the necessary resources for implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

29. It is important to increase funding from within the region and to create a regional funding mechanism, such as an Arab fund or bank for reconstruction and sustainable development, without prejudice to the responsibilities of the international community, especially with respect to problems of which the international community is a major direct or indirect cause, such as climate change, the negative effects of global trading mechanisms and the outbreak of war, conflict and instability. In that regard, we stress the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

30. A genuine partnership must be created at the national and regional levels among the three partners in development: Governments, the private sector and civil society. The League of Arab States initiative for an "Arab decade for civil society" offers a good opportunity to develop, operationalize and expand the mechanisms and structures of such a partnership to include the private sector as an active partner in realizing the Sustainable Development Goals nationally and regionally.

Implementation, follow-up and review at the national level

31. The years 2016 and 2017 will be particularly important for making a strong start on adapting and implementing the 2030 Agenda at the national level. Countries should do the following:

- Start to incorporate all the components of the global Agenda;
- Start to set up institutional frameworks to take the lead in the development process;
- Devise approaches that adapt the Agenda's Goals and targets to national and regional particularities and priorities;
- Begin to develop national capacities;
- Begin to build consensus on review and follow-up mechanisms;
- Define the roles of various partners, in particular the regional organizations and the United Nations regional system, and create mechanisms to take advantage of expertise in different areas while preserving the integrated nature of the Sustainable Development Goals.

32. There is no one single formula for the institutional framework States must set up for the adaptation, planning, follow-up and implementation process in accordance with the general framework provided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the obligations of States with respect to its principles and objectives. It is up to each State to find the institutional arrangement it deems suitable for the integrated nature of the Agenda and to create effective mechanisms for coordination and integration between the relevant government ministries and agencies and domestic and foreign partners, provided that such mechanisms are close to decision makers and decisions are made within an appropriate time frame.

33. The national institutional framework should allow for the participation of all relevant actors, including civil society, the private sector, research centres, consulting firms and other actors, and should make effective use of institutional, human, material and natural resources in managing the development process. It should eliminate any waste of such resources. Partnership is a fundamental principle of the Sustainable Development Agenda that should not be overlooked, especially since governments cannot implement national plans within the new global framework on their own.

34. More adequate national financial resources should be provided, financing-for-development partnerships should be enhanced and planning and management mechanisms should be linked to the public budgets and patterns of consumption and production in each country.

35. National ownership should be emphasized in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. That will require sufficient political will, and also theoretical and technical expertise and partnerships to coordinate planning, resource allocation and implementation. High-quality and credible plans and strategies must be adopted by all parties concerned in order to increase the chances of success.

36. We stress the urgent need to strengthen the capacities of national parliaments to perform their legislative and supervisory roles effectively, and the need for access

to information in order to promote policy coherence and ensure transparency in government activities. That will require a qualitative leap in parliamentary action and effective partnership in all phases of implementation, follow-up and review.

37. In implementing the 2030 Agenda, the domestic level should be taken into account and awareness should be maintained of disparities among different regions within a single country. Improvements in national averages might not necessarily mean that all, and especially the groups and areas most in need, are being included. The comprehensive and inclusive nature of the Agenda means that progress must be measured among the most vulnerable, poorest and most marginalized demographic groups and geographical areas.

38. Alongside the commitment of member States to the principles, goals and means of implementation, we also stress the importance of follow-up and review. During the first phase, the focus should be on preparing the institutional framework and coordination and planning mechanisms at the national level, and then national and local plans should be integrated and harmonized. Also during that phase, the foundations should be laid for partnerships and mechanisms for the inclusion of all relevant actors and institutions, including parliaments. The complex and integrated nature of the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets requires increased awareness at all levels, capacity-building for all relevant parties and the creation of appropriate financing mechanisms.

39. It is important to provide accessible data at the national and regional levels, which will require enhancement of the capacities of statistics bureaus in the Arab States.

40. National follow-up and review frameworks should include mechanisms for thorough, independent and transparent evaluation of policies and programmes, in order to measure impacts and outcomes, analyse progress and trends, identify obstacles and expedite implementation.

41. The Arab countries need to be part of the global follow-up and review processes. We commend the initiative of Egypt and Morocco in being among the first States to submit their national voluntary reviews to the 2016 high-level political forum on sustainable development.

42. States are in need of capacity-building and should be provided with technical support. United Nations agencies, regional organizations and development partners in the region should create a supportive environment not only for Governments, but for all parties involved, including parliaments and civil society organizations such as unions, professional associations, business organizations, associations of journalists and professionals, the private sector, universities and consulting firms.

The Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

43. The Arab Forum on Sustainable Development should be held on a regular basis. It should be organized in a participatory format and bring together Governments, community-based and regional organizations, civil society, the private sector, major groups and parliaments, with a view to ensuring that the relevant stakeholders for sustainable development in the Arab region work together in a complementary, interactive and cooperative fashion.

44. In order to prepare for the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development, a comprehensive survey must be conducted of all the development activities carried out by the relevant regional and international organizations and the ministerial councils of the League of Arab States. The findings of such a survey would provide key inputs for the Forum and help to disseminate knowledge and promote integration and coordination.

45. The Arab Forum on Sustainable Development offers a framework for discussing transnational issues from a cross-sectoral perspective that encompasses governmental and non-governmental groups, civil society and the private sector. This framework must be strengthened.

46. The Forum is an appropriate context in which to consider voluntary national reports prior to their submission to the high-level political forum, if States wish to do so, in order to exchange national experiences, expertise and lessons learned.

47. The Forum is a regional platform that Arab States can use to consider the means, frameworks and mechanisms for follow-up and review of the sustainable development agenda that builds on existing regional initiatives and structures. It is the appropriate forum in which to review the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits regarding social, economic, environmental, demographic and other issues, and to present regional reports and build consensus regarding their themes. Those reports include regional sectoral reports on such transnational topics as water, food security and international migration, and comprehensive reports such as the Arab Sustainable Development Report.

48. Including the priorities of the region on the agenda of the high-level political forum on sustainable development in New York would ensure that efforts in the Arab region are in line with the agenda of the high-level political forum and complement the work being done in other regions.

49. United Nations organizations and international and regional organizations, including the League of Arab States, must be prepared to work in partnership, coordination and cooperation, so that they can provide technical or substantive support to the work of the Forum and ensure that it is convened on a periodic basis, thus helping the region make its voice heard in international forums.

50. It is important to establish mechanisms for coordination between United Nations organizations and other regional and international organizations and development actors in the region. Such mechanism would ensure that we are able to contribute effectively to capacity development by collecting data and developing knowledge tools that are consistent with the characteristics of the Arab region. It is also necessary to provide institutional and policy support, facilitate partnerships and strengthen the statistical capabilities of the countries of the region.

III. Proceedings of sessions and presentations

51. In addition to the opening and closing sessions, four sessions were held to review and discuss the following themes:

Session one: Understanding the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Session two: Moving from commitment to action at the national level

Session three: Setting priorities and addressing regional challenges to achieving sustainable development goals

Session four: The way forward — working together to ensure no one is left behind

Opening session

52. Ms. Rima Khalaf, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ESCWA, Ms. Haifa Abu Ghazala, Assistant Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, and Mr. Imad Najib Fakhoury, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation of Jordan, delivered addresses at the opening session.

53. Ms. Khalaf focused on the transformative nature of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adding that she considered that to be a necessary condition of sustainability. She stressed the need for coherence between the global agenda and regional challenges and priorities, in particular the strong correlation between peace, poverty, inequality and global environmental degradation in the Arab region, which suffers greatly from occupation, wars and conflicts, and the resulting refugee situations, displacement, killing and destruction of wealth and opportunities. She also emphasized the importance of the Global Partnership for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, the importance of partnership among Governments, regional civil society organizations and with the private sector, and the responsibility of the United Nations and ESCWA to encourage the creation of spaces for dialogue and promote the use existing spaces.

54. Ms. Abu Ghazala spoke about Arab preparations for the 2030 Agenda in previous years, in particular the activities organized by League of Arab States or in which the League participated at the ministerial level and other levels, and recalled the mixed results of efforts to realize the Millennium Development Goals. She noted that the Arab Ministers of Social Affairs, at their meeting in Cairo in April 2016, had discussed the social component of the 2030 Agenda and had decided to launch the "Arab decade for civil society", which the League believes offers an opportunity to elevate the partnership between civil society and Arab Governments.

55. Mr. Fakhoury stressed that the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development had an important role to play in ensuring that the Arab region is able to keep pace in the new phase of global development, which builds on what has been achieved internationally, regionally and nationally in economic, social and environmental affairs. He noted that this requires the development of an Arab road map for the implementation process that is based on the Arab Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development and on regional priorities and national challenges. He added that opportunities for cooperation between Arab countries grew out of effective partnership among Governments, the public and private sectors, and civil society organizations. He also emphasized the importance of monitoring and evaluation in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Session one: Understanding the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

56. The objective of this session was to provide an overview of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to look at its specific components. The

participants heard a presentation on the national experiences of Morocco and the Sudan, and two presentations on the correlation between the components of the 2030 Agenda, the first on the correlation between poverty, growth and employment, and the second on the environment.

57. The session was chaired by Mr. Ahmad Qatarneh, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Environment of Jordan. The session was addressed by Ms. Roula Majdalani, Director, Sustainable Development Policies Division, ESCWA; Mr. Mustafa Abdali, Office of the High Commission for Planning, Morocco; Mr. Abbas Koriena Mohamed Elawad, Secretary-General of the National Council for Strategic Planning of the Ministry of Presidential Affairs of the Sudan; Mr. Khalid Abou Ismail, Chief, Economic Development and Poverty Section, ESCWA; and Ms. Melanie Hutchinson, Regional Development Coordinator, Regional Office for West Asia, United Nations Environment Programme.

58. Ms. Majdalani gave the keynote presentation, which focused on the developments that had led to agreement on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. She reviewed the four components of the 2030 Agenda — the Declaration, the Goals, means of implementation and follow-up and review — and emphasized that they were interconnected. She added that no component may be overlooked and underscored the correlation between the Sustainable Development Goals. Ms. Majdalani then reviewed the most prominent challenges to sustainable development in the Arab world and emphasized the role of ESCWA in supporting efforts aimed at achieving sustainable development.

59. Mr. Abdali presented the experience of Morocco with regard to sustainable development and spoke about the steps taken by the Moroccan Government during the preparation of its voluntary report, which will be submitted this year to the high-level political forum on sustainable development. He explained the consultative process by which Morocco had developed a methodology for addressing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. That methodology calls for goals and targets to be grouped in accordance with the five components of the Preamble, namely, people, the planet, prosperity, peace and partnership, and for those goals and targets to then be redistributed on the basis of the core values of the 2030 Agenda. He added that Morocco had conducted a comprehensive survey of its sectoral policies and assessed their compatibility with the themes of the 2030 Agenda, in preparation for the next phase of the integration of the 2030 Agenda into national planning.

60. Mr. Elawad said that the Sudan considered the 2030 Agenda and the Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want as the frameworks of its development policies. Accordingly, his country continued to use the planning mechanisms already in place, but it had harmonized the national development plan with those frameworks. He outlined the governing principles for determining national priorities and explained that the Sudan has taken practical steps to form national committees and institutional frameworks that will follow up national progress at all levels in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

61. Mr. Abu Ismail provided a practical example of the linkage between the fight against poverty, economic growth and employment in the Arab region, explaining the virtuous cycle that results from this linkage and its relevance to the main challenges facing the Arab region, which suffers from high unemployment, weak economic participation and lack of decent work conditions. In that connection, he noted that poverty has not declined during the past two decades in most Arab

countries. Mr. Abu Ismail said that the average poverty rate (lower line) in the region stood at 20 per cent, and the unemployment rate was 12 per cent, the highest in the world. Meanwhile, unemployment among young people stood at 40 per cent and women's share of the labour force was only 21 per cent, the lowest rate in the world. Fragmented efforts and the apparent lack of coherence among the different goals, targets and dimensions had resulted in failure to achieve the desired outcomes in the previous phase.

62. Ms. Hutchinson addressed the environmental component of the 2030 Agenda. She highlighted the interconnection among the Sustainable Development Goals by drawing attention to the link between the goal on sustainable consumption and production and the other 12 Sustainable Development Goals. She underscored that it was possible to address the myriad issues related food security, including the persistence of hunger despite the availability of enough food for all, volatility in food prices, increased consumption of natural resources, food loss and waste, by developing coherent solutions. Ms. Hutchinson also drew attention to the challenge posed by the tendency for decision makers to assign greater importance to the economic aspects of sustainable development, at the expense of the other aspects; to view environmental protection as a burden, not as an opportunity; and to consider security and peace as being separate from development. She spoke about ways of effecting the change needed to make a true shift towards sustainable development, including the adoption of an integrated and balanced approach to sustainable development; changing prevailing ideas; removing institutional barriers that promote a sectoral approach instead of an integrated approach; strengthening synergies among the various financing mechanisms available for the various Sustainable Development Goals; establishing partnerships; and developing innovative strategies.

Session two: planning and implementation at the national level

63. The second session was chaired by Ambassador Majdi Radi, Representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt, and was addressed by Ms. Nathalie Bouché, Team Leader, Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development, Regional Centre for Arab States, United Nations Development Programme; Mr. Adib Ni'meh, Regional Advisor for the 2030 Agenda, ESCWA; Mr. Luay Shabaneh, Regional Director, United Nations Population Fund; Ms. Nihal El Megharbel, Vice-Minister of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reform of Egypt; Ms. Inaya Zidan, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics; Mr. Ziad Obeidat, Director, Development Plans and Programmes, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Jordan.

64. Ms. Bouché gave a presentation on the tools available for integrating the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development into national plans. She reviewed some of the tools that the United Nations Development Group and the United Nations Development Programme had produced, including the guidance note for United Nations country teams. Those tools incorporated a three-step approach consisting of mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support strategy. Ms. Bouché also said that the United Nations Development Programme had prepared Goal-specific guidance papers.

65. Mr. Ni'meh presented a comparison of the Millennium Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, noting that the 2030 Agenda is

more complex than the Millennium Development Goals and is being implemented in a more complex international environment. He spoke about the global nature of the 2030 Agenda and its indivisibility, and the consistency between the five dimensions of sustainable human development, namely, the economic, social, environmental, political and cultural, on the one hand, and the global plan, the characteristics of the region, national goals and ends and means, on the other. He also presented a methodology for breaking down the Goals and reorganizing them in the context of the national adaptation process, while maintaining their integration and interdependence.

66. Mr. Shabaneh spoke about the importance of demographic issues in the Arab countries, particularly the issue of youth, who make up a large proportion of the population. He said that this issue is of the highest priority because most countries are in the early stages of the demographic transition or in the stages immediately preceding it. Mr. Shabaneh focused on the serious challenges facing the region, such as asylum, displacement due to wars and conflicts and various forms of migration, including rural-urban migration, in pursuit of job opportunities and a better life. He also drew attention to the relationship between population dynamics and economic and social dynamics. The manner in which those dynamics played out could lead either to improved development opportunities, if appropriate policies were in place, or to increased inequality, if population issues were not addressed.

67. Ms. El Megharbel gave a presentation on the experience of Egypt in planning and drafting "Egypt Vision 2030", and what Egypt had done to ensure that its vision is aligned with the 2030 Agenda. She explained that Egypt has begun drafting the national development plan for 2030 some three years ago, that is, before the adoption of the global sustainable development agenda. The plan, which was developed using national planning mechanisms, drew on a national database and was the product of a consultative process in which all relevant ministries, partners and experts participated. Comprehensive in nature, the plan included goals, quantitative achievements, indicators and monitoring and follow-up mechanisms. After the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted in September 2015, the Egyptian Government sought to harmonize national goals and targets with the global goals and targets. It also strengthened the national planning process by broadening the consultative process, in order to harmonize the global and national plans.

68. Ms. Zidan spoke about the lack of data and ways of addressing that problem, future trends and follow-up mechanisms. She stressed the importance of aligning indicators for the Arab region with global indicators and the need to identify the priorities of each State. Decision makers and statistical offices could not agree on priorities, and there was little cooperation, coordination and genuine partnership among all parties in respect of data provisioning. The various data producers failed to adhere to international standards, classifications and definitions. In addition, some of the indicators did not apply to certain States.

69. Mr. Obeidat, recounting the experience of Jordan, said that the "Jordan 2025" strategy is based on a long-term vision. The strategy is broad and flexible and is based on three-year operational development plans. The comparison and harmonization process had begun and was the first step towards integration of the global goals into the national strategy. The process, which took into account national priorities, was being carried out with the assistance of the relevant

ministries and other partners. This methodology would ensure greater cohesion between the goals and targets, on the one hand, and budgets, on the other, thereby increasing the likelihood of achieving the goals and targets. It would also help to identify funding gaps, so that efforts could be made to seek other sources of funding, including international assistance. Awareness-raising and communications are also important components of the operational plans.

Session three: development challenges at the national level

70. The third session was a moderated discussion with Member States on regional priorities; issues specific to the Arab region and their impact on sustainable development; and the role of partnership and cooperation among the States of the region in the implementation of the sustainable development goals and in the follow-up and review process.

71. The session was chaired by Mr. Abdallah Al Dardari, Deputy Executive Secretary for Programmes, ESCWA. The session was addressed by Ms. Reem Nejdawi, Chief, Food and Environment Policies Section, ESCWA; Mr. Fateh Azzam, Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship, American University of Beirut; and Mr. Ziad Abdel Samad, Executive Director, Arab NGO Network for Development.

72. Ms. Nejdawi reviewed the most significant findings of the first Arab Report on Sustainable Development, which include increased poverty rates, weak social protection systems, poor food availability because of restricted food production, water scarcity and land degradation. She also spoke about other critical issues that affect the Arab region, such as violence and instability, which constituted one of the greatest obstacles to achieving sustainable development, adding that, in 2014, there were approximately 11 million refugees and 15 million displaced persons in the Arab region. Ms. Nejdawi stressed that efforts to address those issues must be guided by respect for the dignity and well-being of humans, and must be aimed at creating sustainable and resilient societies, and establishing peace. She also emphasized the importance of regional action to implement the 2030 Agenda in the Arab region and the need to establish good governance, promote transparency, accountability and the rule of law, and foster community participation in order to respond to the myriad challenges posed by weak institutions. It was imperative to pursue integrated planning; improve coordination mechanisms; make use of modern tools, such as modelling; link science with policy; harmonize financing with sustainable development needs; and improve data collection and processing capacity, with a view to formulating effective, evidence-based policies. She emphasized the need to build human capacity and improve research and development, and added that concerted efforts were required by all development partners from the public and private sectors, civil society organizations, academia and the media, all of which had an equally important role to play.

73. Mr. Azzam drew attention to the need to adopt a rights perspective in every aspect of global and national development plans. It was not enough to become a party t. the international human rights instruments, something which most Arab countries had done. States must truly comply with those instruments by reviewing their national laws and harmonizing them with human rights laws. He said that the participation of civil society in the development process and in policymaking in the

Arab region remains weak at the national and regional levels, and stressed the need to increase and institutionalize the participation of civil society in regional and national institutions, in order to increase the likelihood of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

74. Mr. Abdel Samad spoke about the contributions of civil society organizations to Arab preparations for the post-2015 development agenda at the regional and international levels. He noted that civil society was calling for the adoption of a new development model at the global level that takes into account the need to address the structural imbalances in the world economy that generate inequality. Some progress had been made with regard to partnership between governments and civil society. The League of Arab States initiative to organize the "Arab decade of civil society" is a positive step that must be built upon. He stressed the importance of the private sector's commitment to the human rights system, and the importance of protecting the national policymaking space through the solidarity of all parties involved in national development. Governments must commit to formulating development plans in a participatory manner that protects the interests of all population groups. He also stressed the importance of Goal 16, which concerns peace and governance, to the Arab region and the importance of reforming tax policy in order to reduce inequality.

75. This session reviewed the outcomes of previous meetings on the global sustainable development agenda:

(a) Ms. Ghada Wali, Minister of Social Solidarity of Egypt and Head of the Executive Bureau of the Council of Arab Ministers of Social Affairs, presented the outcomes of the ministerial-level conference on the theme of "Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Arab States: the social dimensions", which was held in Cairo on 6 and 7 April 2016;

(b) Ms. Adala Atira, Head of the Environmental Quality Authority of the State of Palestine and representative of the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment, presented the outcomes of the preparatory meeting for the 2016 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development and the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, which were held in Beirut on 14 April 2016;

(c) Ms. Ikhlas Aranki, Assistant Director General of the Department of Statistics of Jordan and member of the Arab technical working group on population indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals, reviewed the outcomes of the meeting that the group held in Cairo on 11 and 12 May 2016;

(d) Overview of regional issues related to the role of civil society in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the outcomes of the Arab Conference on the Role of Civil Society in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was held in Doha on 20 and 21 April 2016.

Session IV: The way forward — working together for inclusive sustainable development

76. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Luay Shabaneh, Regional Director, United Nations Population Fund, and the speakers were Ms. Nada El-Agizy, Director for Sustainable Development and International Cooperation at the League of Arab States, and Ms. Karima El-Korri, Chief of the Population and Social Development

Division and head of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Unit at ESCWA.

77. Ms. El-Agizy discussed the challenges that impede development in several Arab countries, as well as the role of the Secretariat of the League of Arab States in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. She pointed to the need to support Arab development efforts and to set out a unified Arab vision on implementing the Sustainable Development Goals by fostering cooperation with Arab and international stakeholders. This would have a positive impact on citizens and their standard of living. Ms. El-Agizy also stressed the importance of outreach to civil society organizations and the private sector as key development partners. She pointed out that the Secretariat of the League of Arab States had taken the initiative to establish a sustainable development and international cooperation department to respond to the needs of Arab countries and strengthen cooperation with regional and international organizations.

78. Ms. El-Korri gave a presentation on the follow-up and review process and its national, regional and global dimensions, with a focus on the principles of national ownership, inclusiveness, participation, transparency and the achievement of results. She also focused on national review mechanisms and the drafting of thematic and regional reports. She touched upon the role of the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development as a regional platform that can facilitate dialogue among various stakeholders and bring consistency to regional policy and approaches aimed at implementing the 2030 Agenda. Ms. El-Korri stressed the importance of follow-up and review in awareness-raising, advocacy, experience-sharing, providing data and improving the quality thereof, and analysing progress made so that achievements can be assessed, obstacles identified and implementation accelerated. She provided an overview of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, to be held in New York in July 2016, to which the findings and recommendations of the regional forums will be submitted, including the key messages from the 2016 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development.

Closing session: key messages

79. The 2016 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development closed with the messages adopted by the Forum, which reflect the views and experiences of participants, as well as the achievements made by the States of the region and the challenges they continue to face. Participants agreed on these messages in full, and they are included in the present report on the 2016 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development, which will be submitted to the high-level political forum on sustainable development in New York.

IV. Participants

80. The Forum was attended by 151 high-level participants, including representatives of ESCWA, the organizing body; the League of Arab States; the United Nations Environment Programme; the United Nations Population Fund, the Regional Coordination Mechanism; the Jordanian Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation; and representatives from United Nations bodies and programmes, international organizations, the private sector, major regional groups,

sustainable development stakeholders in the Arab region and a number of Arab parliamentarians.

81. In addition to a representative from the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, a total of 53 delegates from 16 Arab countries participated. Fifteen of these countries were members of ESCWA: Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Tunisia, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Sudan, Iraq, the State of Palestine, Qatar, Lebanon, Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Mauritania and Yemen. They delegate represented such various specialized ministries as development and economic planning, foreign affairs and international cooperation, social development and labour, local development, administrative development, finance, trade, health and environment, as well as a number of central statistical agencies and central banks.

82. Forty-two representatives of United Nations organizations also attended, as well as 20 representatives from regional and international organizations and 22 representatives of major groups, including the Arab NGO Network for Development, the Arab Forum for Environment and Development, the Arab Network for Environment and Development, the Arab Group for the Protection of Nature, the Centre for Arab Unity Studies, the Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship, the Bahrain Women's Association for Human Development, the Jordan Green Building Council, the Federation of Jordanian Women Farmers/Arab Women Farmers Network, Jordanian Friends of Environment, Land and Human to Advocate Progress and a number of private sector participants.

83. The United Nations was represented by most of the member organizations of the Regional Coordination Mechanism, namely the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, UN Women, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, the World Food Programme, the United Nations Office for Project Services, the United Nations Information Centre, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, as well as representatives of the International Organization for Migration.

84. The regional organizations that participated included the Arab Labour Organization, the Arab League Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization, the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development, the Arab Women's Organization, the Council of Arab Economic Unity, the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics, the Arab Women's Centre for Training and Research, the Saudi Fund for Development. Participating international organizations included the International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas, Transparency International, the Global Green Growth Institute, the Danish Human Rights Institute and others.